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MOJO

The Music Magazine





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LONDON • MEMPHIS • ST LOUIS

JUNE 2017

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46 CHUCK BERRY No one did more than he to mint the music and attitude that would define rock'n'roll. David Fricke on a pioneering genius; Keith Richards on "an amazing piece of work".

52 JEFF BUCKLEY Twenty years since his death, the poet-rocker's friends and colleagues on a talent curtailed as he planned an album "that would scare people".

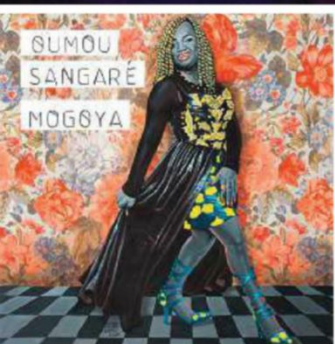
COVER STORY

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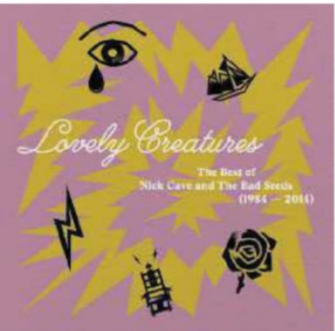
"He had an amazing way of synthesising what was going on and bringing it down to the essentials."

KEITH RICHARDS ON CHUCK BERRY, PAGE 49

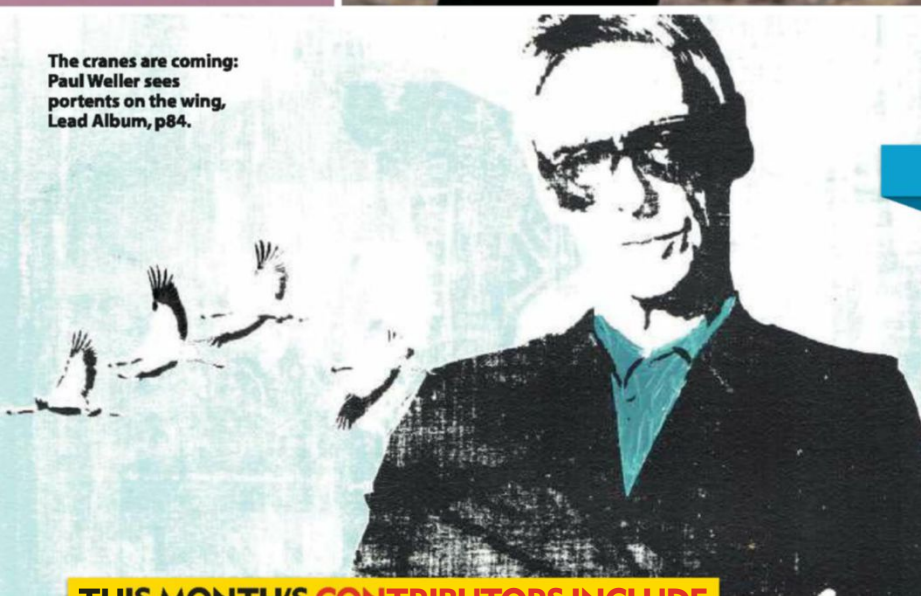
There is nothing like a Dane: Agnes Obel, *Lives*, p116.



"Art doesn't have to be perfect": Emel, *MOJO Rising*, p24.



The cranes are coming: Paul Weller sees portents on the wing, *Lead Album*, p84.



THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE



Chris Nelson

MOJO regular Chris was first spellbound by Chuck Berry as a five-year-old, spinning an original *Roll Over Beethoven* 45 that he inherited from his aunt. As part of our tribute to Chuck, Chris talks to Charles Berry Jr about his dad's last album. Turn to page 50.



Merri Cyr

Merri has been documenting musicians for a couple of decades and has photographed over 80 LP covers. Currently house photographer for NYC events at Apple, she is working on her book *25 Years Of Grace* (available to pre-order at backwingstore.com/grace). Her photos of Jeff Buckley start on p52.



Jon Savage

Jon Savage has been a contributor to *MOJO* since the very first issue. His most recent book is *1966: The Year The Decade Exploded*, while his compilation *1967: The Year The Decade Divided* is out on Ace Records now. Turn to page 68 for Jon's track-by-track assessment of The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

MOJO

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WHAT GOES ON!

- 12 AMERICAN EPIC** An upcoming film series on US popular song of the '20s and '30s, American Epic is also a recording project where, with help from Jack White, names including Willie Nelson, Elton John, Taj Mahal and Nas cut songs old and new on a vintage Scully lathe! Jack tells all on this extraordinary retro-modern endeavour.
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MOJO FILTER

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ALIVE DRIVE IN



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CHILDREN OF PEPPER

MOJO PRESENTS 15 TRACKS INSPIRED BY THE BEATLES' CLASSIC 1967 ALBUM



1 Ty Segall The Clock

Having been known to cover The Beatles' early blasting tunes, San Francisco's Ty Segall also has the melodic acumen to nod to the Lennon & McCartney school of songwriting. Nine albums into his career, his freak flag is flying higher than ever, but for this compilation we step back to 2014's *Manipulator* album – a long-player which includes this wonderfully arranged and atmospheric slice of modern psych.

Available on: *Manipulator* (DRAG CITY)



2 Dutch Uncles Big Balloon

The ultimate example of psychedelic experimentation, *Sgt. Pepper* also pushed music in a more progressive direction. Marple-based moodists the Dutch Uncles exemplify the more recent moves in intelligent pop. They cut their 2009 debut LP in The Beatles' old stomping ground of Hamburg, their complex, textured approach drawing a line between *Pepper*'s creative impetus and the adventures of '80s pop-psych eccentrics XTC.

Available on: *Big Balloon* (MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES)



3 Sic Alps Moviehead

Sadly now defunct, San Francisco's Sic Alps star burnt brightly for almost a decade prior to their fifth and final album in 2012. *Moviehead* is taken from that and is a seductive example of their scuffed, garage-pop sound. The track's super-fuzzed bass and picked guitar intro lead you into frontman Mike Donovan spinning an escapist yarn, his lyrical mention of "teenage symphonies" referencing Brian Wilson's proclamation about his troubled 1967 masterpiece, *Smile*.

Available on: *Sic Alps* (DRAG CITY)



4 Gap Dream Shine Your Light

Akron-born, Californian dreamer Gabe Fulvimar is a man in love with psychedelia and synthesizers. These key influences have animated the music he's made on the three album he's released in the past five years. This plush symphonic sounding tune is the title track of his second, 2013 effort and is rich in melodic McCartneyisms. Lyrically, however, it wrestles with the concepts of hope and despair in a manner that Lennon may well have approved of.

Available on: *Shine Your Light* (BURGER)



9 The Apples In Stereo Strawberryfire

Led by unashamed *Pepper* evangelist Robert Schneider, The Apples In Stereo are another key part of the Elephant 6 scene (see Track 5 above). Loosely based on The Beach Boys' *Smile* classic *Fire*, Strawberryfire's lush atmosphere is designed to match the tale of a girl sitting and listening to pre-*Pepper* single Strawberry Fields Forever. A definite case of mission accomplished.

Available on: *Her Wallpaper Reverie* (THE ELEPHANT 6 RECORDING CO.)



10 The Essex Green Primrose

Despite their name, The Essex Green hail from Brooklyn rather than the verdant county to the north-east of London. Their sound, however, is undoubtedly infused with a sense of Anglican melody. It also has much in common with that of the Elephant 6 collective who invited the three-piece to join their ranks. This track underlines why, its arrangement, instrument and vocal augmentation inducing a woozy sense of joy. Sing together now: "My primrose is melting away!"

Available on: *Everything Is Green*



11 The Frowning Clouds Inner Circle

In all fairness, Australian outfit The Frowning Clouds are perhaps more indebted to *Rubber Soul* than *Pepper*. Oh, and The Kinks and Syd's Floyd (although it should be noted that frontman Zak Olsen is also a keen Nick Mason fan). This particular tune ripples with a menace characteristic of certain early British psych records, its sense of whimsy suddenly blown apart by an over-driven guitar outburst. Mind-rocking, indeed!

Available on: *Legalize Everything* (RICE IS NICE)

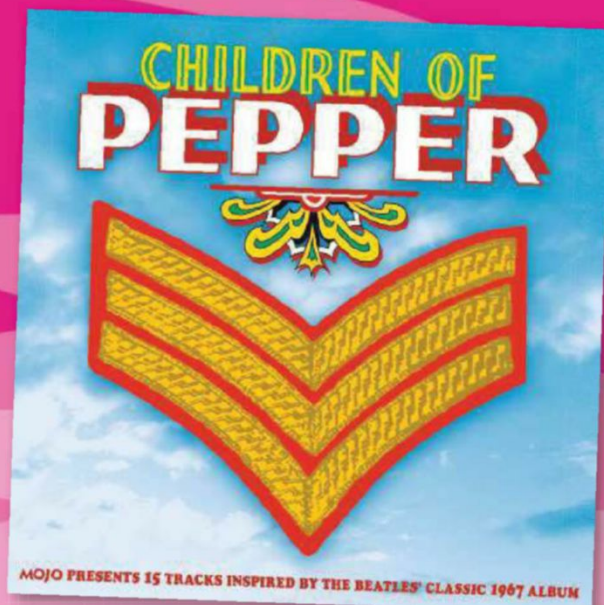


12 Cosmonauts Vanilla

Formed in 2009, California contrarians the Cosmonauts deliver a brand of garage pop that is also infused with acerbic lyricism and an audible sneer. Their music rippling with nonchalance, their melodies are nevertheless insidious, evoking The Beatles' psychedelic period at its most direct. Think of Dear Prudence as played by Spacemen 3 and you come close to Vanilla – a remarkable lo-fi psychedelic gem.

Available on: *Persona Non Grate* (BURGER)

QUESTION: IS *SGT. PEPPER THE 'BEST' BEATLES ALBUM?*
 Answer: "I think it's the most *influential* Beatles album," says Paul McCartney speaking to MOJO for this month's exclusive cover story. And, you have to concede, that he is indeed right. As Jon Savage's breakdown of the 13 tracks on offer outlines, *Pepper* is the source of endless idealism and bold musical experimentation. It is that duality that has fed in to so much of the music made in the five decades that have elapsed since its release. The 15 pieces of music that make up this bespoke MOJO collection reflect as much. Welcome, then, to a celebration of music made by artists whose work continues to allow us to dream of tangerine trees and marmalade skies...



5 The Sunshine Fix Future History And The Irrelevance Of Time

Based in Athens, GA, The Elephant 6 music collective were key to the development of US psychedelia in the '90s, spawning The Apples In Stereo, Neutral Milk Hotel and Olivia Tremor Control – the latter featuring Bill Doss. His journey began in high school band The Sunshine Fix, which he went back to when OTC called it a day in 2000, the year this track was released. Doss worked with Fix until his death in 2012.

Available on: *The Future History Of A Sunshine Fix EP* (KINDERCORE)



6 Sundowners Ritual

Wirral five-piece the Sundowners are in a Mersey lineage that runs a bit like this: The Beatles, the Bunnymen, The Las, The Coral. Indeed, James and Ian Skelly from the latter outfit produced their debut album. "They're our version of George Martin and Geoff Emerick," they told the Liverpool Echo back in 2015, alluding to The Beatles' producer and engineer. Two years on, co-vocalists Niahm Rowe and Fiona Skelly weave baroque harmonies designed to transport you.

Available on: *Cut The Master* (SKELETON KEY)



7 Pond 30000 Megatons

Australian collective Pond reached these ears back in 2009 with their debut album, the fantastically titled and impressive sounding *Psychedelic Mango*. Having shared members with Tame Impala (Kevin Parker is a former collaborator), Pond have continued to create a blissful musical universe over the course of five subsequent albums. The spiralling and seductive 30000 Megatons is a taster from their brand new effort, *The Weather*, which is due out on May 5.

Available on: *The Weather* (MARATHON)



8 Thee Oh Sees The Lens

As the founder of Castle Face Records and the leader of Thee Oh Sees, John Dwyer is a man who has released more music in the last decade than probably any other musician on the planet. In the last 12 months alone, Thee Oh Sees have released three albums – a live set and a twin pair of startling studio efforts. However, this wondrous tune is taken from 2014's *Drop*, its arrangement evoking the spirit of '67.

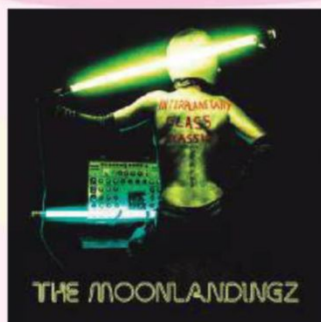
Available on: *Drop* (CASTLE FACE)



13 Gnoomes Cascais

Hailing from Perm in Russia, Gnoomes last appeared on a MOJO CD last year. Since then the trio have cut a second album, *Tschak!*, for the good people at Rocket Recordings. Recorded against a backdrop of unrest in their hometown, the album is dense and yet full of beguiling, submerged melodies, electronic textures and motorik beats. The dream-like quality of their music is evident. So too is the fact that Gnoomes prefer to look skywards.

Available on: *Tschak!* (ROCKET RECORDINGS)



14 The Moonlandingz Sweet Saturn Mine

By rights The Moonlandingz should not exist. Start out as the figment of someone's imagination, in the last 12 months they have moved from being a work of fiction into a genuine band, their debut album, *Interplanetary Class Classics*, being produced by Sean Lennon. Their recent run of live shows has confirmed them as psychedelic avatars for this current broken age. Sweet Saturn Mine proves how vital they are...

Available on: *Interplanetary Class Classics* (TRANSGRESSIVE)



15 Pictish Trail Strange Sun

Pictish Trail (aka Johnny Lynch) recalls getting a guitar and a Beatles chord book at a young age which, added to the '80s pop of the time, set him off on his musical path. Creating his own sound world, he also ran the fabled Fence Records – home to many fine, and fantastic records. Now he runs Lost Map Records – a label whose very name suggests he's still on his own singular path, if such a thing didn't sound quite so trite...

Available on: *Future Echoes* (LOSTMAP/CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL)

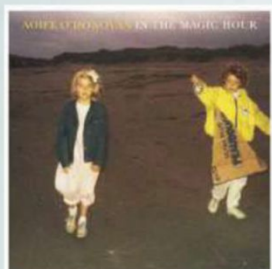
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Blur, Elvis Costello,
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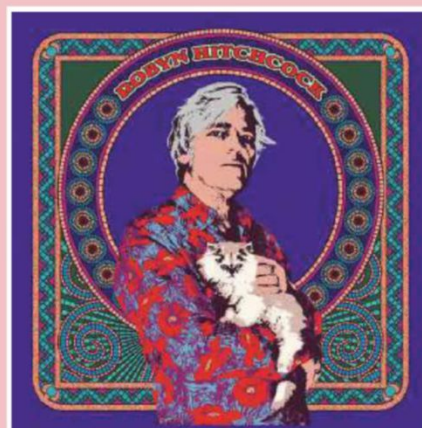
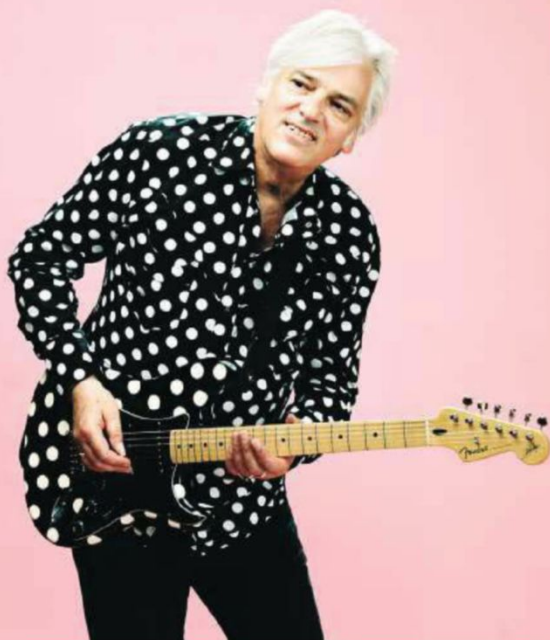
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- 27 Whelans (upstairs) - Dublin, Ireland

ROBYN HITCHCOCK

Robyn Hitchcock

Produced by Brendan Benson and Robyn Hitchcock First Electric Band Album Since 2009



WHAT'S SO FUNNY ABOUT PEACE, LOVE AND... LOS STRAITJACKETS

MAY 2017

13 classic **NICK LOWE** songs delivered with the
signature instrumental flare of Los Straitjackets





Valerie June

ORGANIC-MOONSHINE-ROOTS-MUSIC-MAKER

What music are you currently grooving to?

I landed in Tennessee yesterday and I plugged in my iPhone in this rental car and **Taj Mahal's** *Ain't Gwine To Whistle Dixie* (Any Mo') came on, and that is a song I played for my dad, in Nashville, right at the same spot. So I knew he was talking to me. I'm learning a new language of how to communicate with him since he's gone. I've been listening to it on repeat for the last 30 hours.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

The Milk-Eyed Mender by **Joanna Newsom**. Or if the house is on fire, I might grab **Dolly Parton's** *Jolene*.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

Imagine by **John Lennon** on CD, I was 14, from Wal-Mart. On vinyl, I think it was a **Mississippi John Hurt** album. I have a terrible memory, I don't remember anything, a few of my ex-husbands' names, maybe...

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

Tina Turner. She has no boundaries. She did everything she wanted to do in any genre. And she's from Nutbush, Tennessee, right down the street from where I'm from.

What do you sing in the shower?

Things that I'm working on. When something is coming, I just put it on loop in my mind and sing it again and again until I get to a place where I can record it or write it down.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Meet Me In The City by **Junior Kimbrough** – it makes you wanna dance all night, and drink whiskey.

And your Sunday morning record?

Nick Drake, *Pink Moon*. I'll wake up slow, eat two fried eggs, and take it easy... I'll water my plants, which takes about 30 minutes to an hour. After that, figure out what's next.

Valerie June's The Order Of Time is out on Concord Records/Caroline Music

ALL BACK TO MY PLACE

IN WHICH THE STARS REVEAL THE SONIC DELIGHTS GUARANTEED TO GET THEM GOING...

Ghost

A NAMELESS GHOUL SPEAKS

What music are you currently grooving to?

A **Fabio Frizzi** soundtrack, *Manhattan Baby* from 1982. It's Italian progressive horror soundtrack music, which I find myself listening to a lot. Where's my place? Currently I'm in Linköping – mentally, an infernal region, a sort of hell.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

I really don't know, I have so many favourites. One I'd refer to as groundbreaking to me, and has a certain relevance today, is *Love Gun* by **Kiss**.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

It was probably a **Stones** record, *Aftermath*, from a store here in town in the mid '80s.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

The one I've mostly looked at with a certain awe was **Keith Richards**, that's

probably the guy I've found, throughout my life, the coolest ever. But then when it comes to playing I'd probably want to be **David Gilmour**.

What do you sing in the shower?

Either something I'm writing or like, the last time in the shower I probably sang **Cheap Thrills** by **Sia**, he he. It's a really good chorus. I like a lot of pop music.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

It depends. My life goes back and forth between a very domestic lifestyle and out on the road. If I wanna have a good time, **AC/DC**, the big one: *Back In Black*. It's such a phenomenal record – You Shook Me All Night Long, Let Me Put My Love Into You...

And your Sunday morning record?

New Trolls' Concerto Grosso Per I New Trolls. Really good. Italian prog records between 1972 and 1976 have enormous musicality. If you wanna listen to really well-crafted songs that have had a lot of time and effort and probably reefer put into them, just go to the Prog Italiano section, '70s.

Feargal Sharkey

UNDERTONES INDUSTRY BRAIN

What music are you currently grooving to?

I've been driving and the iPod came up with **DJ Shadow** and **Little Dragon's** *Scale It Back*, **Paul Weller's** *Wild Wood* and **The Spencer Davis Group's** *Gimme Some Lovin'*.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Marvin Gaye *What's Going On*. I was 13, 14 when I first heard it and it just sounded an extraordinarily sophisticated record but also taught me that pop music could be about much more than "Baby I love you". And the **MC5**: that whole introduction to *Kick Out The Jams* was a whole awakening. About five years ago I met **Wayne Kramer**, and was like, "Holy shit, it's Wayne Kramer!" His response was, "Yeah but you're **Feargal Sharkey** and my wife thinks **The Undertones** were the best band ever!" So a big hello to **Wayne Kramer's** wife!

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

If I'm being completely honest it was a **Top Of The Pops** compilation when I was about 10, no doubt from **Woolies**.



Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

Bloody hell. **Ray Charles**. It's that combination of singer, songwriter and a man who can sit down at a piano and tell a story like no other.

What do you sing in the shower?

I hum random things. I'm one of these people that walks around humming, annoying everyone. Last night it was **Arthur McBride**, by **Planxty**.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

It would have to be **Acperience** by **Hardfloor**. Probably the greatest techno record ever.

And your Sunday morning record?

Carole King's *Tapestry*. Possibly the finest songwriter alive. If you wrote one of those songs you'd die happy.

New, independent bands! Want to win £50,000? Head to new digital music competition platform salute-music.co.uk to find out how...



NOW PLAYING

● Valerie June's Sunday sound for watering plants: **Nick Drake's** bittersweet farewell from 1972, *Pink Moon*.
● **Ghost's** *Nameless Ghoul* thinks **Genoa Progers** *New Trolls' 1971 LP Concerto Grosso Per I New Trolls* suits the Lord's Day.
● **Feargal Sharkey's** Saturday night rave up tune: **Hardfloor's** 1992 mental acid banger *Acperience*, in all its brain warping forms.

staff



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WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU ACTUALLY

listened to Sgt. Pepper? I mean, properly listened to it? The album's familiarity is such, the songs so ingrained in our collective consciousness, that it's an almost impossible task. And yet, Giles Martin's new mix of *Pepper* genuinely provides us all with the opportunity to listen to The Beatles' most influential album afresh. Sitting in Abbey Road a few months back, that experience proved revelatory, Giles's restoration underlining the sonic adventurism on offer. So, as Paul McCartney revisits 1967 (see page 64), we celebrate *Pepper* reborn! Listen to it closely, but be warned! It may well blow your mind all over again...



PHIL ALEXANDER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Rally the land to rebellion

I have to say that I really enjoyed your decision to get Roger Waters to revisit *Animals* [MOJO 282]. The album has always been a totally underrated part of Floyd's canon, known for its imagery rather than for its music. But its themes and feel are key to their development, so thank you for rehabilitating it. The only downside? I have to say that, as your piece mentioned, its relevance right now is rather frightening...

Roger Smythe, via e-mail

What do you see?

With regards to your piece on Pink Floyd's exhibition, *Their Mortal Remains*, I laughed out loud at Nick Mason's dismissal of the idea based on the fact that the band were "a bit short on costumes". I, for one, want to see Dave Gilmour's Pig shirt (as shown on page 74 of your issue) housed in a glass case for us all to marvel at!

Pauline Jonas, via e-mail

Anti-music missiles

I will give you my house, my car, all of my money – I'll even sell you my soul and grandmother – if you promise never to publish another feature about Pink Floyd!! Please, please I beg you!

Tony Dawson-Hill, via e-mail

I don't want to alarm you

Your last CD – *Pigs Might Fly: A Compendium Of Progressive Sounds* [MOJO 282] – was a treat but I am still mystified about your inability to 'fess up and admit that prog was more significant than punk. I am sure you're standing by to celebrate the one and

only Sex Pistols album, but what about the REAL music from '76 and '77? By that I mean proper pieces on Genesis's *A Trick Of The Tail*, Magma's *Üdü Wüdü*, Camel's *Moon Moonmadness*, Yes's *Going For The One*, Jethro Tull's underrated *Songs From The Wood* and even Rush's *A Farewell To Kings*. Surely, all great records full of wondrous stories (if you pardon the pun!) and worthy of reappraisal now that 'prog' no longer seems to be a pejorative term. Thanks for listening...

Philip Harrison, Prof. De Prog, via e-mail

A tickle of joy

Great to read the interview with Dave Brock [MOJO 282]. Gosh, it brought so many memories back. Whilst *In Search Of Space* is undoubtedly the best musically of their early albums, my fondest memories are associated with that first album, *Hawkwind*, in 1970. Original pressings of both albums are now collectable, but not massively valuable: copies of *Hawkwind* on black label Liberty in gatefold sleeve can fetch £45 upwards whilst copies of *In Search Of Space*, gatefold sleeve (A1/B4 matrix with booklet), can fetch £60. I bought the first album from a small shop in Derby which did hire purchase, good for those of us teenagers with Saturday jobs. Loon pants, tie-dye T-shirts and long hair.

There was a club called Clouds which had a rock night on Thursday(s) called Magic Of Ju Ju: saw many a band there that went on to bigger things (for example, very early Genesis at the time of their first album) and the two bands associated with the free music attitude: The Pink Fairies and Hawkwind. Still got copies of the flyers for the club. Then, this album accompanied my, erm, first psychedelic journey, in the garden shed of a friend

of mine that he had been banished to by his parents.

Other albums played that night included the first Heron album on the Dawn label (now very valuable); the first album by Gracious on Vertigo (also very valuable) and the first album by Touch on Deram (likewise now very valuable). Still got my copies. Sweet memories...

Terry Maunder, via e-mail

Bad scene, lads!

Dave Brock's assertions in your magazine justifying the inclusion of Sam Fox on-stage at the band's Hawkestra gig are misguided. She may have been friends with Lemmy and she may have done a charity single with Hawkwind. But so what? She wasn't a member of Hawkwind, and she shouldn't have been on that stage. It should have been a proper celebration of that band and all its members. The fact that the entire gig was a bit of a shambles is neither here nor there because Hawkwind have always been capable of fucking up. She just had no place there. And, yes, Dave, I am one of those people who "didn't like it".

Moonglum Jnr, Morpeth

No time for trivialities

After reading your last issue [MOJO 282] I was reminded of one simple thing: the greatest artists are not always those who reap what they sow. I can give you two examples: The Incredible String Band and Delaney & Bonnie. Two acts deserving of so much more. Both, in fact, artists that should probably be on your cover instead of, er, Stink Floyd... Anyhow, keep up the good work by shining a light on music by those who deserve better.

Michael Rogers, via e-mail

Soft, isn't it?

Am I the only one who feels genuinely sorry for Meat Loaf? I just want to check because after reading your *Bat Out Of Hell* piece, I feel even more sorry for him than I did before. Enjoyed the piece, though – despite the cheap jibe in your cover line. Whatever you think, it's still a great album.

Steve Evans, via e-mail

If we slip back through time

At last! A mention in MOJO of the greatest band I've ever heard: Wigwam! OK, so it was only a clue in your crossword [MOJO 282], but at least it means you are aware of them. This band have a fascinating history that at least rivals those of Fleetwood Mac and Fairport Convention, what with the deaths of members, religious conversions, etc. They have a great discography which if you extend it to the solo releases by individual members absolutely equals any band ever. The three greatest 'London' songwriters of all-time are Ray Davies, Pete Townshend and Jim

Pembroke of Wigwam. It totally amazes me that no British music mag has ever done an in-depth article on this incredible bunch of real musicians. Love your crossword!

Nic Stayt, via e-mail

I can hear my beard growing...

Your photograph of The Boo Radleys in the last issue [Time Machine, MOJO 282] made me feel strangely nostalgic for the mid-'90s when a band like them were able to score a Number 1 album. While I was never really a fan of that entire period of British music, I look back on it with a strangely nostalgic glow. Which is pretty odd since I am only 36. Maybe, after all, I am a child of Britpop? How terrifying.

Tim Fellows, via e-mail

Have you got time to rectify?

Great to see Rod Argent reliving the rise and fall of The Zombies in your last issue. But... they are so clearly a band who clearly deserve more than one meagre page in your magazine. Couldn't you have lopped a couple off that flimsy feature on Prince? They're nice photos but...

Anyway, please sort that out as soon as. Thanks.
Steve 'The Oracle', via e-mail

Something strange is happening

Future Islands have been my favourite band for the last three years, so reading a piece about them in your latest issue was a real treat. May I suggest that you continue to champion what I consider to be the New Wave Of Outsider Pop (or NWOOP, if you will!). There's a lot of it about. If you want, I can furnish you with a list. War On Drugs would obviously be on there too. So would Field Music. But that's just the tip of the iceberg – an iceberg in which you can probably see the refraction of talents as diverse as Lower Dens through to Polica via Dan Deacon. I could go on.

Marcus Stevens, Sussex, via e-mail

Hey! Wait and watch...

I am writing to thank you for the great night you organised around the MOJO screening of the Bowie Ziggy Stardust movie [which happened nationwide on March 7]. What a night it was! Seeing that classic concert on a big screen was a real treat. But so too was seeing Woody Woodmansey in conversation with your editor in the pre-film. Receiving the special collectors' cover of your magazine was the cherry on the cake! Please can you do another Bowie screening soon? Not sure which film I'd pick, mind. Over to you, MOJO...

Sally Evans, via e-mail

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Printing: William Gibbons
MOJO (ISSN 1351-0193) is published 12 times a year by Bauer Consumer Media Ltd. Bauer Consumer Media Ltd is a company registered in England and Wales with company number 01176085, registered address Media House, Peterborough Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough PE2 6EA
Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named Air Business Ltd, c/o Worldnet Shipping Inc., 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA.

Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica, NY 11431. US Postmaster: Send address changes to MOJO, Air Business Ltd, c/o Worldnet Shipping Inc., 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA

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WHAT GOES

It was good for our mothers, and it's good enough for me: (from left) Jack White, Willie Nelson and the late, great Merle Haggard prepare to record *The Only Man Wilder Than Me*, 2015.

EPICPOETS

GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE

Jack White helps revive an ancient technology, and the musicians it captured, in a series of films broadcast transatlantically in May.

There's a priceless moment in *American Epic: The Sessions*, the final instalment of a group of films slated for broadcast on BBC Four and PBS in mid-May. Jack White has helped persuade a procession of star musicians to pop into a Los Angeles studio and cut tunes straight to a vintage Scully lathe – just the type of machine that would have recorded folk, blues and country artists in the 1930s. Trouble is, the webbing strap which holds the weight that descends to spin the lathe at a fixed RPM, suddenly snaps. Disaster! Except... not when the session's prime mover is a former master upholsterer.

White jumps into his car, film-makers

in attendance, and races to a local cleaner/tailor, commandeers a sewing machine and effects the repair himself. The day is saved. And nothing could better underline a point White makes about the history of American popular recording and its grounding in good old opportunism and ingenuity.

"What's great about America is, someone will work hard in some garage or basement somewhere and invent something incredibly cultured and life-altering for everybody to experience," says White. "The next step is to figure out how to monetise it. And that's the part that starts to get really interesting... because once you are aiming to try to make money off of a format of some kind, then happy accidents start happening. And that's how we accidentally got all these amazing artists to record, who never would have been recorded."

American Epic, directed by Bernard MacMahon, produced by Allison

McGourty and Duke Erikson, and co-produced by the BBC's Arena, WNET and PBS (with executive production credits for White, T Bone Burnett and Robert Redford, who narrates) is an expedition to rediscover some of those amazing artists. The first three of four films are straight documentaries, delving into the stories of American archetypes The Carter Family, Mississippi John Hurt and The Memphis Jug Band, and tracing musical threads including the Hawaiian steel guitar boom and its impact on the development of country, and the songs of West Virginia's coal-mining country – music all originally aimed at local markets.

"We are extremely lucky in the 1920s and '30s that rural artists were recorded that would have never been recorded had these companies not wanted to sell records to rural people," explains White. "And a lot of these songs have changed the world, really."

©2017 Lo-Max Films Ltd (9)

ON!

THE HOT NEWS AND BIZARRE STORIES FROM PLANET MOJO



Scully bullies: Los Angeles scenes (right, from top) the famous lathe; Alabama Shakes; Jack and band; with Elton; Taj Mahal sings; Edie Brickell and Steve Martin; Beck; (below) The Memphis Jug Band ride the Missouri Pacific Railroad.



The story of the pioneer phase of the US recording industry runs alongside that of the artists, culminating in American Epic: The Sessions, where contemporary acts discover kinship with America's recording originals, with stars including Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, Rhiannon Giddens, Alabama Shakes, Taj Mahal, Bettye LaVette, Beck and rapper Nas cutting tunes from the '20s to the '40s plus contemporary songs in a vintage style, overseen by White and Burnett, using 1920s microphones and the Scully lathe. In one of the series' most extraordinary moments, Elton John arrives toting a box-fresh lyric by Bernie Taupin and works it up in an instant, the song materialising in front of the viewers' eyes before John and Jack White go for the take. There's the magic right there.

"Recording studios in general have sort of been churches for music," says White. "You had to come rehearsed with your songs ready to go. This is your one moment to do that. And all the recordings since the beginning of this recording technology were like that. You came to the room prepared

"RECORDING STUDIOS HAVE SORT OF BEEN CHURCHES FOR MUSIC."
Jack White

for this moment. So that's like going to church; that's like getting on your best clothes and going to church for this moment to happen. You can't fix this later. Any mistakes that happen are going to be there, in the finished record, which is a great place to be. It's a scary place to be for some people too."

American Epic has also inspired a batch of audio releases. May 12 sees the emergence of *American Epic: The Collection* – a 5-CD, 100-song box set of restored original recordings – and *American Epic: The Soundtrack* – a 15-song highlights set on Sony Legacy. Recordings from the Sessions instalment are also due, in 1-CD and 2-CD deluxe packages on Columbia, while Jack White's Third Man outfit plan vinyl compilations of artists featured in American Epic, including The Memphis Jug Band, and a Sessions soundtrack. An American Epic book is published by Simon & Schuster on May 2.

Danny Eccleston

MOJOWORKING

THE WATERBOYS

Lovestruck Mike Scott brings rap, Muscle Shoals and Japan to twelfth album.

It's not every day you hear Mike Scott impersonate a US police officer singing opera while putting up a bookshelf, but The Waterboys' chief does so fleetingly on New York I Love You, an episodic, character-rich newie that owes something to the riff from The Velvet Underground's Sweet Jane. If Scott sounds especially buoyant on his upcoming double set, it's with good reason. "There are about 15 love songs – many more than I've put on a record before," he says, alluding to his courtship of – and subsequent marriage to – the Japanese artist Megumi Igarashi, AKA Rokudenashiko.

Work on *Out Of All This Blue* – the title comes from a song that didn't make the cut – began in June 2015. It was largely made at Scott's Dublin studio, Puck Towers, with additional recording at the city's Cauldron Studios.

A recent Scott Tweet surprised fans when it flagged the new album's soul, R&B and even hip-hop influences, and while The Waterboys are still a way from Dre, the loops and found-sounds which pepper songs such as If The Answer Is Yeah certainly break new ground for the man behind 1985's celebrated *This Is The Sea* and its rootsy 1988 follow-up, *Fisherman's Blues*.

"Rock'n'roll is a retro form and I'm not finding anything new in it," explains Scott. "The thing I love about hip-hop is that even though it's been around for about 35 years it's still a changing frontier. I love its reckless freedom."

Blue explosion: Mike Scott in his Dublin home studio Puck Towers, with the Stones on the wall and a DVD of Thor awaiting viewing.

"HIP-HOP... I LOVE ITS RECKLESS FREEDOM."

Some of the new material was written in Japan while Scott courted Rokudenashiko (the couple are now based in Dublin and have a baby son together), and three of the songs have Japanese titles. "One is called Payo Payo Chin, which is an affectionate Japanese way of saying good morning," says Scott. "There also a funny hip-hop tune called Yamaben that's about the guy who was Megumi's lawyer during her court case." [In May 2016, Tokyo District Court found Rokudenashiko, who is known for her female genitalia-inspired works, not guilty of obscenity].

Collaborators this time out include Scott's long-term foil Steve Wickham on Hendrixesque fuzz-fiddle, while esteemed bassist/Muscle Shoals swamper David Hood and Hammond organ ace 'Brother Paul' Brown are among the other returnees from the sessions that spawned 2015's *Modern Blues*. Scott also recruited Trey Pollard of Space-bomb Productions for string and brass arrangements.

"Another big part of my writing is because I'm a dad now," adds Scott. "I've also got a little daughter [from a previous relationship with singer/actress Camille O'Sullivan], and she keeps saying, 'Daddy! Another story out of your head!' I'm continuously making up songs for her, and in a funny way that has opened the creative floodgates."

James McNair



FACT SHEET

Title: *Out Of All This Blue*

Due: September, 2017

Producer: Mike Scott.

Mixed by Scott and Bob Clearmountain.

Songs: If I Was Your Boyfriend, New York I Love You, Monument, If The Answer Is Yeah, The Elegant Companion, The Connemara Fox.

The Buzz: "The best Waterboys album ever. There are 23 songs on the main double album, plus another 16 on a third bonus CD of alternate mixes and mash-ups, plus hip-hop instrumentals." Mike Scott

ALSO WORKING

... **ARETHA FRANKLIN** is making a new album in Detroit. The Queen Of Soul told city station Local 4 News' Evrod Cassim, "Stevie [Wonder, right, with 'Ree] is going to bring some new music for me." Her granddaughter Victorie and son Eddie will also appear; alongside new material there'll be covers of **Marvin Gaye's** What's Going

On and widely-covered Christmas song Mary, Did You Know? ... **SAINT ETIENNE's** *Home Counties* arrives in June. A concept piece about a day in the life of southern England, its glowing retro-pop vignettes include the Enfield Poltergeist, Brexit and, on Train Drivers In Eyeliner, a cap-doffing to **Nick Sanderson**, late frontman of **Earl Brutus**. ... **BLACK GRAPE's** new LP is

out in summer. Says Shaun Ryder, "writing-wise we've topped the first album" ... ska veterans **MAROON TOWN** are taking the PledgeMusic route for their fifth LP. Rocksteady, Latin and rap influences are promised: five per cent of all cash raised over their target will go to youth work in Jamaica, such as reggae conservatoire the **Alpha Boys School**. ... **PAUL HEATON & JACQUI ABBOTT** will release an as-yet-untitled

new album in summer. Produced by **John Owen Williams** at Chairworks in Castleford, songs include The Future Mrs Heaton, I Gotta Praise and She Got The Garden. As ever, Heaton (left) wrote his lyrics in the Dutch towns of Monnickendam and Volendam, and the music in a hotel in Puerto Rico de Gran Canaria. Since 1985 he's used an old portable Philips tape recorder to gather ideas, but has now switched to smart phone...



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MOJOPLAYLIST

Drink the long draught... and check the records, for cowboy whistling, catwalk remixology and psycho-surfing!

1 SPARKS

HIPPOPOTAMUS

Combining Dr Seuss whimsy, classical miniaturism and the archest humours – with an invitation to dance – Ron and Russell Mael return as only they can. “We’re completely in sync with what we want to do,” says Ron. “Sometimes it’s a kind of trial and error approach, where we don’t want anyone to know that there was an error along the way.” But what have the noble hippo, micturition in the swimming pool and Hieronymus Bosch got to do with it? Maybe we’ll find out on the new album of the same name and its UK tour, both happening in September.

Find It: [YouTube](#)

2 MARTIN CARR GOLD LIFT

Inspired by William Blake, Bob Dylan and Joseph Goebbels, genuflect before the erstwhile Boo Radleys rekindled pop genius on this zinging plastic soul counterblast to the shitocracy of Brexit and Trump (AKA “orange Mussolini”).

Find It: [sonnyboy.bandcamp.com](#)



3 ENNIO MORRICONE A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS THEME

From Sergio Leone’s 1964 spaghetti western classic, the sound of blood, dust, greed and vengeance, building to a galloping crescendo with the masterful whistling of Alessandro Alessandroni, who died on March 26.

Find It: [YouTube](#)

4 NOVO AMOR CARRY YOU

Setting the scene for his new release as one of trembling, spectral beauty, this soaring mini-symphony swells with big euphoric strings and the Welsh bedroom auteur’s uncanny falsetto; like a one-man Fleet Foxes.

Find It: [Rough Trade EP](#)

5 YAZZ AHMED THE SHOAL OF SOULS

Bahrain-born British jazz flugelhorn player and trumpeter (credits include Radiohead and Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry) ropes in Shabaka Hutchings on bass clarinet for the title track to her La Saboteuse project; languorous cinematic drift and seductive spoken word.

Find It: [yazzahmed.com](#)

6 ROY OF THE RAVERS MELCHESTER ACID (PART TWO)

Want to explore the infrequently-probed interzone where football comics and acid house meet? Get thee hither, for all the squelch and squidge you could want. From 2015’s 2 Late 4 Love cassette.

Find It: [YouTube](#)

Mael drop: above, Ron (left) and Russell in reflective mood; (below) Yazz Ahmed keeps things soulful.

“YAZZ AHMED... A LANGUOROUS, CINEMATIC DRIFT”



7 WOODS LOST IN A CROWD

Brooklyn’s indie folksters come over all dystopian Donovan, pairing a nightmarish psychedelic reminiscence with a tip-toeing melody and tea-cup percussion. From tenth LP *Love Is Love*.

Find It: [Love Is Love \(WOODSIST\)/Streaming services](#)



8 KID KOALA FT EMILIANA TORRINI COLLAPSER

Icelander Torrini brings her timorous girl-trapped-in-a-TV vocals to the Canadian DJ’s new ambient pop album, *Music To Draw To: Satellite*.

Find It: [soundcloud.com/artsandcrafts](#)

9 PADDY McALOON AMERICA

Released onto the net without warning last month, Prefab Sprout’s reclusive genius and his guitar spell out, with pained horror, the dreadful follies of the current US administration.

Find It: [YouTube](#)

10 YORKE & GREENWOOD BLOOM (CREATURES MIX FOR JUN TAKAHASHI)

Remixed Radiohead tracks including Bloom and Everything In Its Right Place, collaged for the Paris Fashion Week show of the Japanese designer and former Johnny Rotten impersonator Takahashi.

Find It: [YouTube](#)

11 THE GRAVITY DRIVE WAKE OF THE DAWN

Favoured by Bob Harris, this Dorset married couple make well-tooled, anthemic pop-rock – in this case like Fleetwood Mac meeting Mum & Dad’s slept-on banger Dawn Rider. “I wish that someone would drop the bomb on me!” it threatens, overwroughtly.

Find It: [SoundCloud](#)



12 WIN YOU’VE GOT THE POWER

What happened in ‘85 when Edinburgh post-punk funk by the Fire Engines’ Davy Henderson got polished up for a chart-smashing that never came. Still insanely catchy, and later a Tennent’s lager ad.

Find It: [YouTube](#)

13 SOULWAX IS IT ALWAYS BINARY

From the Belgian dance punks’ recorded-in-a-day new long-player *From Deewee*, Antmusic meets LCD-style mutant disco.

Find It: [YouTube](#)

14 SHARON VAN ETTEN THE END OF THE WORLD

Straight take on Skeeter Davis’s 1962 hit, from *Resistance Radio: The Man In The High Castle* LP. Inspired by the Philip K Dick TV show, the LP also boasts oldies also remade by Angel Olsen, Beck et al.

Find It: [SoundCloud](#)

15 !!! NRQ

The return of New York dancefloor vets Chk Chk Chk is heralded by this high-energy disco electro fronted by British singer Lea Lea and a mind-bending, nightclub dance-off video.

Find It: [YouTube](#)

16 ADAM FRANKLIN IRON HORSE/BORN TO LOSE/THURSDAY’S CHILD

A Lemmy/Bowie tribute double-A side from the Swervedriver man. Motörhead’s Hells Angel hymn morphs into a Cold War Berlin paranoiac blues, while the Dame’s 1999 single is eerily retro-Bowiefied.

Find It: [Club AC30 7-inch](#)

17 JOSH HARRIS FAIR WEATHER FRIEND

Keyboardist for ‘80s ska revivalists The Untouchables, Marin County baker Josh Harris is a one-man jukebox, boldly mixing country, blues, jazz and breezy reggae-pop.

Find It: [Breadchord Music/Spotify](#)

18 JAMES WILLIAMSON AND DENIZ TEK PENETRATION

From the Acoustic KO EP, the Stooze and the Detroit-born Radio Birdman guitarist re-record the *Raw Power* song, back-porch style. A brooding reinvention, it takes it back to the howling blues roots.

Find It: [SoundCloud](#)



19 RAMSEY LEWIS LES FLEUR

Elegant intoxication from the piano great’s ‘68 LP *Maiden Voyage*. Play with The Jaynetts’ Sally Go ‘Round The Roses for added pagan vibes.

Find It: [YouTube](#)

20 EMPTIFISH SONIC’S GOT A RAY GUN

Pompey’s ‘80s psycho-surf terrace droogs celebrate their recent reunion with a barmy attack of feedback, charting a vicious dogfight with aliens. On pink 10-inch vinyl!

Find It: [detourrecords.co.uk](#)

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UNCUT ★★★★★

SUNDAY TIMES - REPRISE OF THE WEEK

MOJO ★★★★★

INDEPENDENT - ALBUM OF THE WEEK

★★★★★

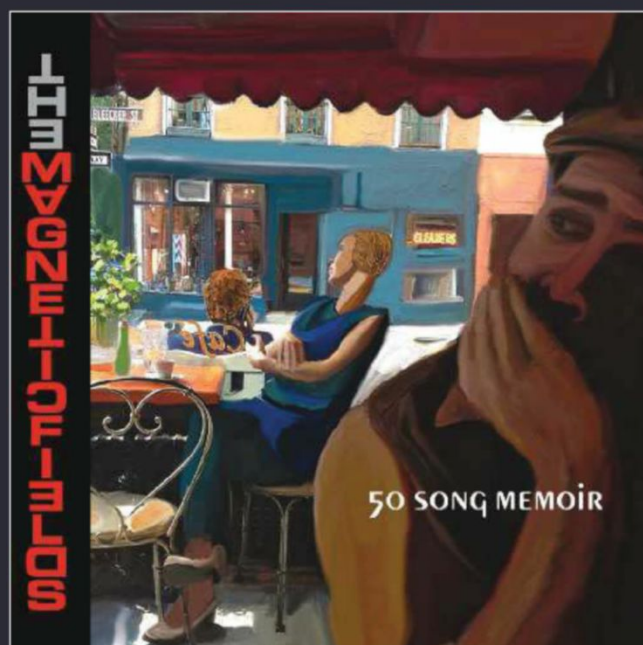
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SELF PORTRAIT

JANE BIRKIN

The Anglo-French singer, actress and muse to Serge Gainsbourg in her own words.

I'd describe myself as... a sort of cartoon. Someone who's got big teeth and mousey hair who's sort of... fun! I like being with people who can make you laugh. I'm serious as well of course.

Music changed me... by giving me a whole other career. It started with Serge, because he started writing for me until he died, for 30 years practically. All that changed what I might have become or not become had I stayed in England and not met him... and all those butterfly theories.

When I'm not making music... I go to the cinema and the theatre, and exhibitions, I try to see [daughter] Charlotte in New York, I've got [daughter] Lou in Paris, I pick up grandchildren. Also, I live next door to the Jardin des Plantes [in Paris], and I know the vet there. He's always doing operations on strange animals and he lets me come. He's got a red-haired

panda that has Alzheimer's, there's a serpent who has cancer of the skin... the animals are very lucky, and it's good when children come and visit me.

My biggest vice is... I like spending money. And I consider being popular a sort of vice, because it's so nice.

The last time I was embarrassed was... the other day. I replied to a journalist, and I wish I'd been brave enough to say, I don't want to answer that question. Instead of which I tried to answer it and got tearful, and then you feel rather revolting because you should have said no. But I'm not embarrassed about most things that make people embarrassed.

My formal qualifications are... I passed a few 'O' Levels - English Literature, English, History, Art, and I think something for needlework.

The last time I cried was... I've already said. I find that I cry more and more. Manchester By The Sea, I was so overwhelmed by the tragedy of that man that I spent the whole film in tears, on a plane. Probably joyful people being sad is the worst thing in the world.

Too much Munkey business: Jane clutches her totem, from the cover shoot of 1971's *Histoire De Melody Nelson*; (below) Birkin today.



"I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE BEEN A NURSE."

Vinyl, CD or MP3? None. I listen to the radio. I'm like something from an old British movie, with the BBC banging on all the time. It educates me. I've got records, quite a lot, because I like the covers - I do have a pick-up [a turntable] but I don't think it's been plugged in for a long time.

My most treasured possession is... it was a monkey, made of felt, that my uncle won in a pub when I was about five. It's on the cover of *Melody Nelson*. I wouldn't move without it. Serge wouldn't move without it! Once we missed a plane because we had to go back to a hotel and find the monkey before they chucked him into a bin, because he looked really hideous. I wrote my diary to him - I wrote his name strangely, as "Munkey". When Serge died, in a pure panic of what to leave with him like some Pharaoh, I thought the children can only be comforted if I put Munkey in [his resting place]. So now I know exactly where he is, and he's doing everything he should have done. Good old Munkey.

The best book I've read is... it always comes back to Dickens for me, because of the characters and the secondary characters. *David Copperfield*, and *Great Expectations* is a such a good one too. Maybe it would have to be the *Collected Dickens*.

Is the glass half-full or half-empty? Sometimes you think it's empty, and it sort of gets filled up again. It's all we've got, so you might as well drink something.

My greatest regret is... I would like to have been a nurse. To be someone who was gentle all day long. But I think songs can be a bandage, if life has been difficult.

When we die... that's it. But you go on in people's memories, I know that, for a generation or so.

I would like to be remembered... by my children. That will be fine. I'd rather not be remembered for the [Hermès] handbag [called 'The Birkin Bag'], though I've got nothing against it. And it would be nice to pop up on the radio. People who know whatever song it might be can remember where they were, and with whom, and what was going right or wrong.

As told to Ian Harrison

Birkin/Gainsbourg Le Symphonique is out on Parlophone France on April 12.

MONDO MOJO

... **JARVIS COCKER**'s signed with Cape to write memoir *This Book Is A Song*. The Bookseller reported it will blend 'biography, essay, texts (plus) illustrations'. **BRETT ANDERSON**'s (right) *Coal Black Mornings*, meanwhile, is due next year from Little, Brown, and covers his life before *Suede*, growing up on a Haywards Heath estate with his boho cabbie



dad... in order to get the final track from the *Paradise EP*, last month **ANOHI** requested fans e-mail 'a gesture of anonymous vulnerability... it is what you have expected of me'... have the days of cult bands playing holiday camps finally passed? The *Safe As Milk* festival, which was set to take on the ATP mantle from April 21-23 with the **Butthole Surfers**, **The Residents** and **Shirley Collins** live at

Pontin's in Prestatyn, pulled the plug in March with weeks to go... **BOB DYLAN** is the subject of a May 20 night at this year's Bath Festival. Hosted by Danny Kelly, the 'gala evening of music and discussion' will feature contributions from Sid Griffin, David Hepworth and others... **ROGER DALTRY** has designed a special car for Rolls-Royce's 'Inspired by British Music' collection. There are

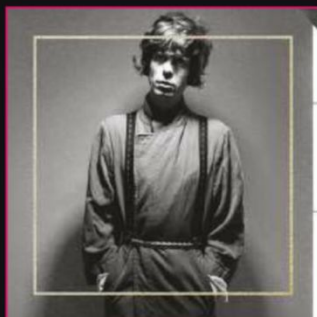
eight other muso-planned motors in the series, and they'll be auctioned off for charity... **DAMO SUZUKI** (left) penned a personal tribute to his late Can bandmate **Jaki Liebezeit**; read at: tinyurl.com/zowdd47... festival-goers prone to bad backs may want to investigate the *Sitpack*, a new portable stool/'resting device' that folds up to the size of a beer can. Go to sitpack.com for details...



hmv

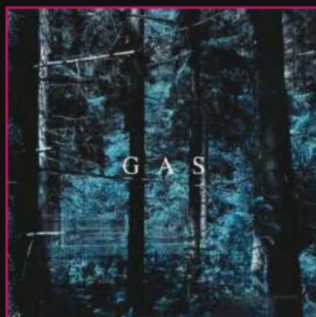
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The Irish singer/songwriter is back with his fifth album on which he explores with electronica, giving the music more room to breathe.



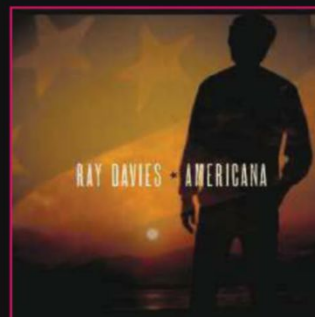
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Narkopop

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The first new album in 17 years from Wolfgang Voigt's legendary GAS project and it's a beautiful, subtle and hypnotic work.



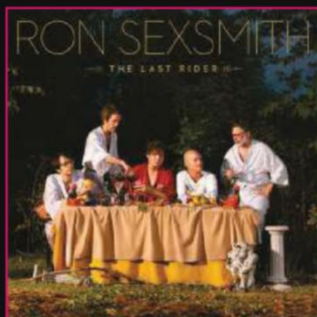
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The brand new album from the Danish indie rock duo features all 12 tracks from their own Rave-Sound-of-the-Month playlist.



Ray Davies
Americana

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Ray's first solo album since 2008 is based around his recent memoir, Americana: The Kinks, The Road And The Perfect Riff.



Ron Sexsmith
The Last Rider

out now on CD
The Last Rider features 15 new Sexsmith original songs that are by turns happy, sad, romantic, bittersweet, uplifting, spiritual and witty.



Hayseed Dixie
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out now on CD
This brand new studio album features their Rockgrass versions of such classics as Oliver's Army and Buffalo Soldier.



The Smith Street Band
More Scared Of You Than You Are Of Me

out now on CD & vinyl
The band's much anticipated fourth album and it's their most ambitious and boldest release to date.



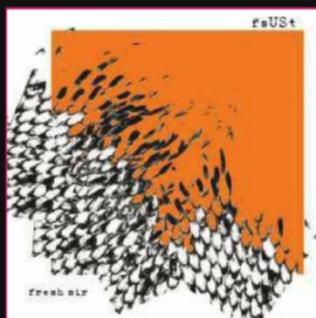
Mark Lanegan Band
Gargoyle

out 28 April on CD & vinyl
This brand new 10-track album features guest appearances from long-time collaborators Josh Homme, Greg Dulli and Duke Garwood.



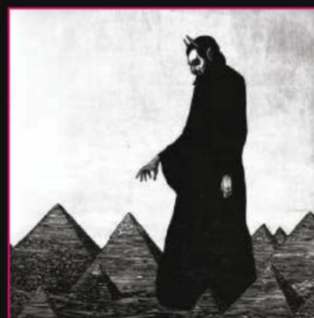
Penguin Cafe
The Imperfect Sea

out 5 May on CD & vinyl
The iconic Penguin Cafe open a brand new chapter. Blissful ambience and dance music recreated using strictly acoustic elements.



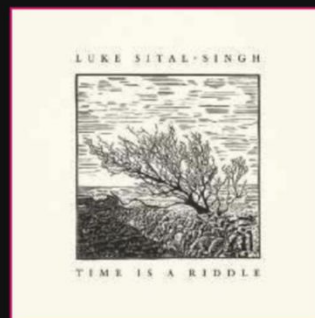
Faust
Fresh Air

out 5 May on CD & vinyl
Kraut rock heroes Faust follow up their 2014 album Just Us with the stunningly hypnotic Fresh Air.



Afghan Whigs
In Spades

out 5 May on CD & vinyl
Produced by frontman Greg Dulli, this is the follow-up to 2014's Do To The Beast and includes the track Demon In Profile.



Luke Sital-Singh
Time Is A Riddle

out 12 May on CD & vinyl
Luke's second album is a beautiful collection of intimate songs that show off the artist's vulnerability and braveness.

hmv

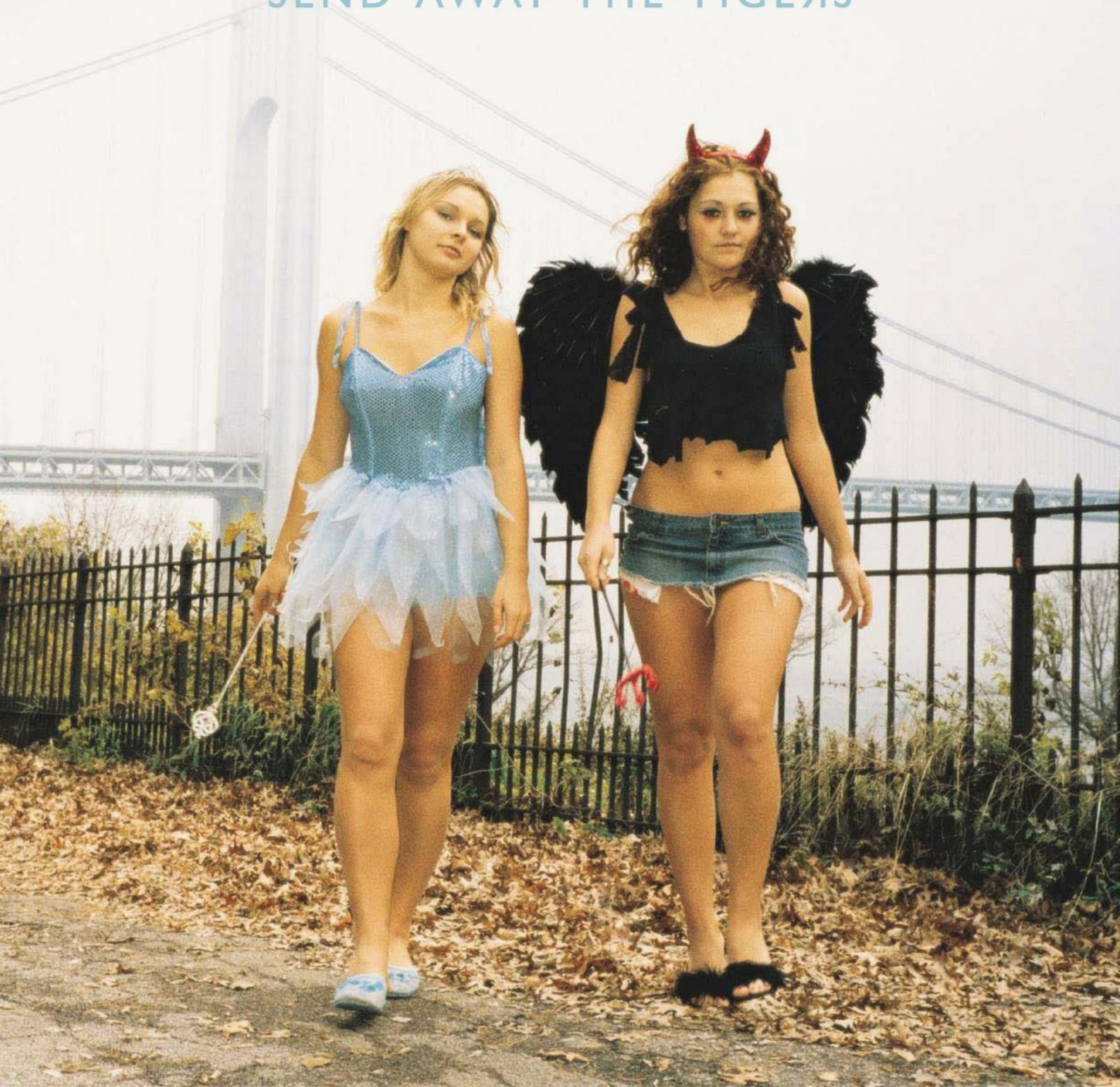
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MINDBLOWERS!

GREG DULLI

The Afghan Whigs' very able man selects songs for exultation, nemesis and DIY cool.



1 GEATER DAVIS I'M GONNA CHANGE

(Seventy-Seven 45, 1973)

"The horns hit you full force right at the jump; like a widescreen soul symphony version of Shine On You Crazy Diamond. It's one of the great ambush moves in music history. But it's still not enough to prepare you for THE VOICE. Geater Davis is one of the greatest singers you will ever hear. Ever. Sandpaper and velvet. Like a chopped and screwed David Ruffin. He takes every syllable and milks it for everything it's got. Apologia in excelsis. How he wasn't a superstar is a mystery I'll never understand. But he is in my heart forever. And verily I say get down. Get down and get lifted."



2 JOHNNY JENKINS BLIND BAT'S AND SWAMP RAT'S

(from Ton-Ton Macoute!, Atco/Capricorn, 1970)

"A great singer in his own right, Johnny Jenkins hired Otis Redding to be in his band as the lead singer of The Pinetoppers, and as a guitar player influenced Jimi Hendrix. He made Ton-Ton Macoute! essentially with who would become the Allman Brothers minus Gregg and Dickey Betts. It's truly killer. While his excellent version of Walk On Gilded Splinters here would be famously sampled as Beck's drum track for Loser and the entire album is a stone jam, I have always gravitated to the sex groove of Blind Bats And Swamp Rats. It's a story-song and it soon becomes apparent that the story here is gonna be revenge. I'll not give away the ending, but I will tell you that Nick Cave should probably cover it someday."

CHRIS WHITLEY

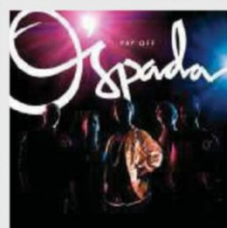


ROCKET HOUSE

3 CHRIS WHITLEY FROM A PHOTOGRAPH

(from Rocket House, ATO, 2001)

"A perfect song. When you hear one, you know it and this is one of those songs. When I first heard it, it made me think of The Last Picture Show and no surprise that both were made in Texas. It is at once fragile and defiant, stately and devastated. At first the world is candlelit and then the sun shoots through the trees and you're suddenly flying through a ghost town only to land again and get your heart sweetly broken. I have listened to this song over and over again and hear new things each and every time. 3:55 of sheer transcendent, ramshackle perfection."



4 O'SPADA PAY OFF

(from Pay Off, Despotz, 2010)

"With more hooks than a tackle box, this song surges from strength to strength to strength. O'Spada are the creation of Swedish songwriter/frontwoman Julia Spada and this lady's got serious singing and songwriting chops. It's superfunky pop and kind of reminds me of Prince's first couple albums with its urgently synthy steez. Plus she can flat out wail. I can't remember how I came to hear the song but after listening to it several times, I was hunting down live performances on YouTube. And while I love the studio recording, the live version at På Jam in Malmö is a definitive take. Barely controlled chaos and a good fucking time is happening right in front of you. Dig it."



5 AARON WILLIAMS (ALLEGEDLY) DRINK 'TIL I CAN'T THINK NO MO

(YouTube (tinyurl.com/l6dn5x), 2015)

"It starts with a stone cold beat that is simply him rapping his knuckles and fingernail on a car hood near a beach somewhere in America. And then this dude begins to slowly blow your mind. He leads in with the hook/chorus and trust me when I say you will be singing it in your head and/or out loud for days. 'I'm gonna drink 'til I can't think no mo, smoke 'til I can't see no mo/I'm gonna go to the club/I'm a show up/Throw money 'til my arms get sore,' he sings. And then begins the Mystikal meets DMX verse bars and things become increasingly more animated as he rhymes you back to that chorus. And like all great MCs, he puts you in the room with him, 'I'm in the VIP/Bad bitches surrounding me/Lickin' their lips/Throwin' their hips.' All while calmly rocking his own beat and hanging on to his Arizona Iced Tea. He's so fucking cool and this song is amazing."

Lipsmacking good:
audio gourmet
Greg Dulli dines in.



ROCK'N'ROLLCONFIDENTIAL

RYUICHI SAKAMOTO

Tokyo's synthesizer master talks humour, murder and David Bowie.

Ryuichi Sakamoto has always been an urbane kind of gent, but today he's taking laconic deadpan to new levels. Maybe it's just the early hour of the day when MOJO calls him at home in New York, or maybe he's slowed down since his recovery from cancer in 2015, but every answer starts with a long pause and is delivered slowly in low tone as if with deadly seriousness. Then, as often as not, Sakamoto ends with a wry chuckle as he reflects upon a memory or foible of culture.

This certainly suits his current music. In the past he's been a techno pioneer (solo and with Yellow Magic Orchestra), made elegant pop with everyone from Iggy Pop to Bootsy Collins to Brian Wilson, and made many dramatic Hollywood soundtracks, starting with Merry

Christmas Mr Lawrence, in which he also acted alongside David Bowie.

However, aside from collaborating on some Japanese pop records with his daughter in the 2000s, his 21st century work has tended towards electronica that's absolutely boggling in its minimalism and glacial pace. Both his score with German electronicist Alva Noto for *The Revenant* and *async*, his first solo album in seven years, are abstracted, dreamlike, and very, very beautiful.

These days you are making very abstract music: do you think you will ever make another pop record?

I'm not sure. If I were to have plenty of boring time, then maybe I would (*laughs*). But nowadays I'm interested in more abstract, free-form, freestyle music – not pop or typical standardised music. If I'm asked to write a song, still I can, but right now my interest is to find unknown forms of music and unknown sounds.

Light fingered: Magic brother Sakamoto keeps it dark.



SAKAMOTO FLOW

1 Bach *The St Matthew Passion* (1722)

2 Bach *The Art Of Fugue* (C.1740-1750)

3 Debussy *La Mer (Second Movement)* (1903-05)

4 Debussy *Préludes – Book 1: No. 6. Des Pas Sur La Neige (Footsteps In The Snow)* (1909-10)

5 Steve Reich *Music For A Large Ensemble* (1978)

Bonus beat: Harold Budd/Brian Eno *Ambient 2: The Plateaux Of Mirror* (EG, 1980)

You do still return to the standard format of the album though...

One practical reason is that the CD is still selling very much in Japan. In New York we've lost almost all the CD shops, there's no more. Vinyl shops yes, but no more CD shops. If you go to Tower Records in Tokyo, though, you see lots and lots of CDs, it's a different world. A more slightly artistic reason is that maybe I'm old, but I still like one set of around 60 minutes of music. Of course, I could be releasing piece-by-piece, any time, it doesn't have to be a set – but I kind of like it!

There was a lot of fun and humour in YMO and your early solo music: was it as much of a laugh as it looks?

Oh yes. It was fun, and we were aware we were doing something very new and unknown with techno or techno-pop or whatever you call it. It was a big pleasure to do something so new. And we injected making fun of the traditional image of the Japanese in the West, the image of Asian people in Hollywood movies, we laughed about this a lot.

I was looking at your *Thousand Knives* album, and you rock a skinny new wave tie and jeans look extraordinarily well – was fashion important to you then?

It was not me, but Yukihiro Takahashi. He was a very good drummer, but also a fashion designer, so mostly it was his ideas. We just wore whatever he gave us – and we liked what he did. When he gave us a red Mao suit, we enjoyed to let people misunderstand if we were Japanese or Chinese – even some Japanese people were puzzled and thought we were Chinese. So we liked it, the mismatch was fun.

When you did your *Playing The Piano* album in 2009, you said you were happy to revisit your old music because you play it at home anyway – is that still the case?

I still play piano at home almost every day, but I only play Bach really. But it's always fun to play my own music, and it's especially fun to conduct an orchestra playing my music, so if someone asks me, I'm happy to do it.

You have collaborated with some great musicians, but you never did with David Bowie despite acting with him and being friends – how come?

Unfortunately no. I asked him to sing on the Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence theme and he said no (*laughs*) – he wanted to focus on acting then. Later on... well, I didn't know he'd go so fast... So that was my mistake. That's my big regret.

There seem to be a lot of electronic-classical film scores at the moment – Clint Mansell, Mica Levi and so on – do you feel like this is a kind of musical movement?

I think so. I can see the trend, but I think it's too many. It's too trendy. Of course, for writers and composers it's really easy, because we can finish the music with just a computer, using limitless libraries of phrases and timbres and colours and instruments, copy and paste and modify it thanks to the power of the computer. I think it's becoming a bit too easy for us!

Some of your tracks seem to have enduring appeal for DJs – did you intend something like [1980 track] *Riot In Lagos* to be a dance tune?

Wow. That's wonderful. I want to know the secret, so I can produce many more tracks like that! Maybe someone can analyse and teach me. For that track I was very much interested in the African R&B, all that music like Fela Kuti – is that dance music? I wanted to make African dance music, maybe.

Tell us something you've never told an interviewer.

I must confess that I killed somebody. I never told that before. (*Long pause*) Of course, it's not a fact... it's an alternative fact. (*Chuckles*)

Joe Muggs

LAST NIGHT A RECORD CHANGED MY LIFE

SERGE PIZZORNO

Kasabian guitar droog hails the scary adventure of Portishead's 2008 comeback *Third*.

I was at Portishead's Nightmare Before Christmas weekend in Minehead in 2007. An amazing, mad line up, in Butlin's. I went to see them and someone gave me ketamine, which I'd never had before. It was insane. They played Machine Gun and I had a moment of, This is the future. It was so minimal, with that incredible John Carpenter synth sound. My legs had turned to jelly, there were flashing lights... I'd had a glimpse into a sound, and I was like, I need the album now.

I had to wait for about six months, but when it arrived, it stayed on repeat for a long time. It's an adventure, a scary one. Geoff Barrow's production, he's got the best taste, he always makes the right decisions. I can hear Lalo Schiffrin, Silver Apples, Hawkwind – things and moods I love. Everything creates this feel and atmosphere – the sharp editing, the use of modular synths, which is unbelievable, the bizarre tunings. They went deep on that: I think a lot of the guitars are out [of tune] but

Trio grand: Serge (below) relishes the druid-folk heavy weaponry of *Third* (bottom).



"I GET FLASHBACKS ...IT GIVES ME THE FEAR."

they're perfect, like the Joy Division bit on We Carry On. There's always a little gem in the middle of the songs. In Hunter, it starts off with this creepy David Lynch sound, and from nowhere there's this synth drop, a weird little sequence [of notes]. Small begins with this eerie cello thing and goes into proper psych rock... the songs just flow, you never know where you are.

And Beth Gibbons' voice – such a strange fit, the piece of the puzzle that makes it so unique. She's like a druid-folk-angel. You feel the pain in it, it's beautiful, it's a weapon, especially on Machine Gun, which is so futuristic and industrial. I know nothing about her, it's just pure mystery, her voice and the lyrics.

It's a work of art and it exists on its own terms, without compromise. It's such a strong instruction to stay on your own path, to not settle. Ask yourself, why are you doing that?

Listening to it now, I get flashbacks. I play it when I go and get my fish and chips at night, there and back, down the country roads, on my own. You're driving and you can't see the horizon and it's pitch black and you can see the trees and your mind races. It gives me the fear. I love that.

As told to Ian Harrison





MOJORISING

EMEL

Tunisia's ex-goth voice of revolution mixes the electronic and the traditional.

"My music doesn't have to be perfect," says Tunisian singer Emel Mathlouthi. "Art doesn't have to be perfect. It has to be human. I wanted to say humanity isn't only about violence and individualism, it's capable of beautiful things like art and empathy."

It's a sunny, early spring day in London and Emel, who has just released her second album, *Ensen* ("Human" in Arabic), is on a break between appearing at the Women Of The World concert at the Royal Festival Hall and flying home to New York. It's a far cry from 2010-11, when she became one of the voices of the revolution that ousted her homeland's president, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Kelmti Horra, a song written by a friend five years previously, went viral as lyrics such as "For those who resist we are the voice" connected with protestors on the street.

"The thing I find interesting is that it's not a commercial song," Emel says. "It's seven minutes long. I never thought about delivering a hit. Listeners understood the most powerful thing is staying true to your original idea."

Unlike another well-known singer of protest songs, Mathlouthi has taken the stage at a Nobel Peace Prize ceremony: in 2015, the committee that oversaw Tunisia's transition to democracy collected the award and she was there with an orchestra to perform her anthem. Good going for somebody who only a few years before

Ball of confusion: Emel, singing from the heart.

had been a high school goth.

It was only when she discovered female singer-songwriters from beyond the Arab world that she realised what could be achieved.

"It wasn't obvious to me that I could be alone on-stage, that I could be independent. Discovering Joan Baez – that was like a powerful, inspiring statement."

Her latest recordings are a mix of electronica and traditional instruments, consciously avoiding the clichéd "exotic/ethnic" sounds of the dreaded "world fusion".

"You can't just sit there and let music happen," she says, "you have to crash, make mistakes." The lyrics on *Ensen*, however, are a strident call to civil disobedience. So does she have a message for anybody who says nobody writes protest songs like they used to?

"Well, that's kind of true. Then, people had the same voice, and we're not there any more, that kind of utopia and common spirit. But you can see a lot of people, particularly women, who know it's their time to make a difference. I hear them talk about how important it is to have music that touches their soul and gives hope. We are making a difference, and this time it's much stronger than it used to be."

"YOU HAVE TO CRASH, MAKE MISTAKES."



FACT SHEET

- For fans of MIA, Yasmine Hamdan, Samaris, James Blake, Sinéad O'Connor.
- Although her on-stage musicians play keyboards, in the studio she builds up the tracks from Tunisian lutes (gumbri), flutes (zokra) and hand drums (bendir).
- Her songs were banned in Tunisia so she moved to France and put them on YouTube.
- She formed a goth-metal band at engineering school – back then, she "hated" Arabic music.

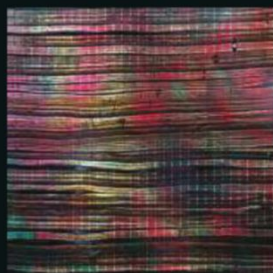
KEY TRACKS

- Kelmti Horra (My Word Is Free)
- Ya Tounes Ya Meskina (Poor Tunisia)
- Ensen Dhaif (Helpless Human)

David Hutcheon

Julien Bourgeois

JOE GODDARD ELECTRO LINES



Songwriter, producer, founding member of Hot Chip, one half of The 2 Bears, DJ, remixer & co-founder of Greco-Roman. Joe Goddard's landmark new album is all about connections, uniting the unique strands of a brilliant career.

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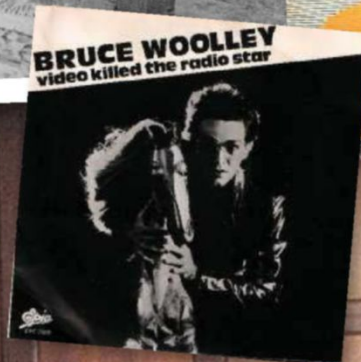
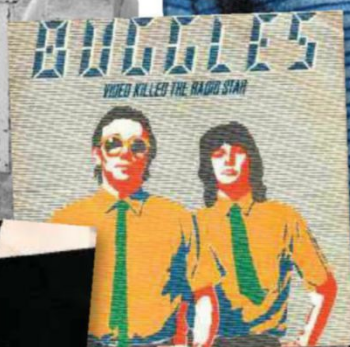


WHAT GOES ON!

MOJO EYEWITNESS

VIDEO KILLED THE RADIO STAR CONQUERS THE WORLD, 1979

An elegiac, prescient mini-epic of techno-pop magnificence, The Buggles' debut single was a Number 1 across the globe. But why was a contemporaneous rival version released? And why, when the pursuit of studio perfection and popular success proved impossible to reconcile, did progressive rock call?



"WHEN YOU GET A HIT, THE PRESSURE IS UNBEARABLE."



Co-writers Bruce Woolley and Trevor Horn recall Abba, JG Ballard and the release of competing singles.

Bruce Woolley: "Trevor and I wrote the song over a couple of afternoons in East Sheen [in 1977]. When we got to the chorus, Trevor suddenly said, 'Video Killed The Radio Star' as I hit the chords. It was one of those flash moments, a real spark of creativity.

We were *interested* guys. At that time everything was changing in society and music – you had the revolution of punk rock, fashion and attitudes were changing dramatically. Add to that, we were reading a lot of science fiction, Robert Silverberg and JG Ballard particularly – his great story *The Sound-Sweep*, about music actually becoming unfashionable to listen to on the audio spectrum, and how you'd only experience it through a kind of invisible medium, like an emotion, was an inspiration on the song. And then Kraftwerk, *Warm Leatherette*... also, Trevor and I basically grew up playing in Mecca dancehalls in Leicester, and I had to learn a lot of Abba music. If you analyse the track, it's almost an homage to Abba. Lyrically, it's the progress of technology leaving something behind, and how there is a price to pay for that.

Trevor and myself, and Geoff Downes, who is a credited writer, were in [disco singer] Tina Charles's backing band, and Tina actually paid for the original pre-Buggles session. That's when the demo, the blueprint if you like, of The Buggles was formed, when I was working with them. But I was never in The Buggles. What happened was, I got offered a solo deal with CBS Records for The Camera Club, and I really wanted to do it. I was a bit more guitar driven, and I wanted to go on the road, and we did our own version of *Video Killed The Radio Star*."

Trevor Horn: "Initially I don't think Bruce was thinking of doing *Video Killed The Radio Star* with The Camera Club, but when I realised he was, I thought it was too strong a song to let go. Geoff and myself had a problem, because the great demo belonged to Tina Charles. We signed to Island, which meant we had to re-record it. You've got to realise, none of it was sequenced, it was all played. We drove ourselves mad, recording and re-recording. We even got the amp that I'd sung the demo through, an old AC30, that I'd flogged to somebody, I had to go and blag it back. By the time we finished I didn't know which way was up, I'd heard it so much. We only finished the mix half an hour before we cut it. The first time I realised how good it actually was when I heard it on Capital Radio.

The two versions came out close together. Bruce's is a rockier version, ours was more peculiar. [The video] was a lot of fun, we told [director] Russell Mulcahy, 'We'll do whatever you want. I remember showing up and putting the silver jacket and those blue glasses on, I'd had my hair permed for some fucking reason, and it was like a blur – stand here, mime to this, put your hand on there. The woman in the tube was his idea, poor girl. They had to have a whole safety team for the bit where she flies off in a harness. It went wrong the first time and the tube fell over with her in it.

Initially, we weren't going to actually go out and mime to it, but, boy, when you get a hit, the pressure is unbearable. The first time it happened we were in France, in a great big radio tent, and the guy came over and said, 'They'll take the record off the radio station if you don't go and mime to it.' So we had to do it: I stood absolutely still, my knees shaking with fear. Then we had to go and drag our arses all over Europe miming on every TV show known to man. But it was an amazing thing, because the song was Number 1 in 16 countries."

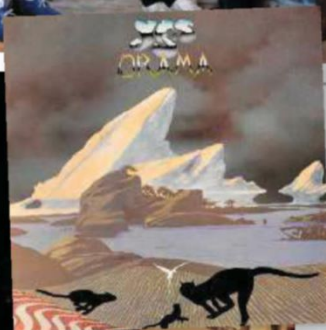
BW: "When someone told me The Buggles' version was Number 1 I had absolutely mixed feelings. I was working quite hard with The Camera Club, giving it everything. But with time, you learn to appreciate what these things mean."

Rewritten by machine:
(clockwise from main)
Buggles Trevor Horn (left)
and Geoff Downes look
forward; the single; Bruce
Woolley (second left) and
The Camera Club; video
scene and Vox AC30;
the three protagonists
touring circa '76 with Tina
Charles (second left); the
two versions; JG Ballard at
home in Shepperton.



TURN OVER! FOR ABANDONED CARS, INTESTINAL FORTITUDE AND BRINGING SONGS TO THE THEATRE STAGE.

LE/Photoshot, Mirrorpix, courtesy of Bruce Woolley



PART 2 "THEY'D TRY AND CHEESE IT UP"

VIDEO KILLED THE RADIO STAR CONQUERS THE WORLD, 1979

Horn and Buggles keysman Geoff Downes recalls custard pies, rubber gloves on TOTP and prog superbands.

Geoff Downes: "The first time the success dawned on me I was driving into Island Records' office. I had this really clapped out Ford Escort estate I used to cart my keyboards around in. I remember the guy saying, 'Fantastic news! It's got to Number 1.' I was driving back and my car broke down on Putney High Street, and I thought, Well, fuck this, I'm just going to leave it here, I've got a Number 1 single."

I actually wanted to be famous and be on TV and in the magazines, but Trevor was a bit more reluctant to go for it – he didn't like doing Fab 208 or Jackie magazine or Smash Hits – but even though I was more receptive to it, it was very, very strange. We did about 25-30 TV shows in Germany and Italy in a very short space of time. They thought nothing of having us, Tom Jones and AC/DC on the same bill. They'd have a couple of chicks hamming it up, dancing in the background, that kind of stuff. We did one up in the mountains somewhere once and they had us on sledges, like that bloody Last Christmas thing with

Wham! They'd try and cheese it up. I used to cheese it up myself sometimes. I went on Top Of The Pops wearing a pair of rubber gloves once. On Tiswas with the Phantom Flan Flinger, I hit Trevor with a flan, sneakily.

But even though we were in the pop world we were pretty serious about our music, and the main problem was that it cut into our recording time, when we were supposed to be doing an album. I think that's ultimately why Trevor got into record production, exclusively. But before that, we both joined Yes."

TH: "Joining Yes was one of those funny things that happens. I was a big fan, and we had the same manager. Chris Squire invited me down for dinner... when I initially said I didn't want to do it,

New Marigold Dream: (main) Downes goes gauntleted on Top Of The Pops; (right, from top) with Yes; *Drama* LP; (below) Trevor and Tiswas's Phantom Flan Flinger; final 45 Lenny.

"BEFORE THAT, WE BOTH JOINED YES."

because I'd never be able to sing as well as Jon Anderson, Chris said, 'You mean you're gonna pass up this kind of an opportunity? Haven't you got the bottle?' The funny thing is if I hadn't made [1980 LP] *Drama* with them I never would have been able to produce 90125 [1983], which is a really good album.

Did it derail The Buggles? Totally. There was a second album [1981's *Adventures In Modern Recording*], after Geoff went off to join [prog super-group] Asia. We had a hit with a track off it called Lenny, in Europe, and that was the last thing I did, I went to Amsterdam and mimed to it with ABC playing The Buggles. When Video Killed The Radio Star was the first video on MTV in 1981, it didn't really affect me much, because by the time it really kicked in I was producing records.

Now Bruce and myself are working on The Robot Sings, a musical which will include Video Killed The Radio Star. We've been banging away at it for decades. It's only just really got to a point now where we have a script. Writing a musical is basically a flying fuck at a doughnut. You've got no idea how many hurdles you have to cross."

As told to Ian Harrison

A bold new version of Video Killed The Radio Star by Bruce Woolley & Polly Scattergood with The Radio Science Orchestra is out now. Says Polly, "It was quite a poignant song to sing, and we played with so many different textures and layers. Bruce's Theremin playing is quite wonderful."



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TIME MACHINE

MAY 1961 ...NINA SIMONE DEBUTS AT CARNEGIE HALL

MAY 21 The headline in The New York Times on the morning of May 22 was prosaic: "Two Folk Singers Present Concert". Yet the review was anything but, Robert Shelton reporting that on the previous night, "Two incandescent women musicians, Miriam Makeba and Nina

Simone joined to give a concert late yesterday afternoon at Carnegie Hall."

It was the first time that Nina Simone had appeared at the prestigious New York venue. The May 21 concert, a benefit for the Presbyterian Church Of The Master in Harlem, saw her share a stage with her friend Miriam Makeba, the singer from the Xhosa people of South Africa whose vocals' click consonants and dynamic tones provided her with a genuinely unique sound.

A true world artist, Makeba performed a range of Zulu songs, calypsos and folk music. Simone was equally resistant to being tagged with any specific music label. Reviewer Shelton, noting that Nina's guitarist Al Schackman sometimes supplemented his basically jazz approach with Indian flavours, and that drummer Bobby Hamilton used Arabic finger cymbals, observed: "It had little to do with the

Freedom now: (clockwise from main) Nina Simone on-stage; Miriam Makeba exults live; Ms Simone's latest; the illustrious venue.

traditional song she was working on but it is useless to measure the unpredictable and whimsical Miss Simone by any narrow standards."

Life was good for Nina at that point. She had divorced husband Don Ross and had a new love in her life, Andy Stroud, a rugged-looking guy whom she'd met while working a two-week engagement at a Manhattan club a few weeks before. He'd initially told her that he was a bank-teller but the truth was that Stroud was a Harlem cop, a detective-sergeant who'd been part of the force for some 14 years.

Nina had laughed when he explained his reluctance to reveal his true occupation. Certainly he had a fearsome reputation. Frankie Lymon claimed that Stroud had once pushed a certain miscreant off a roof.

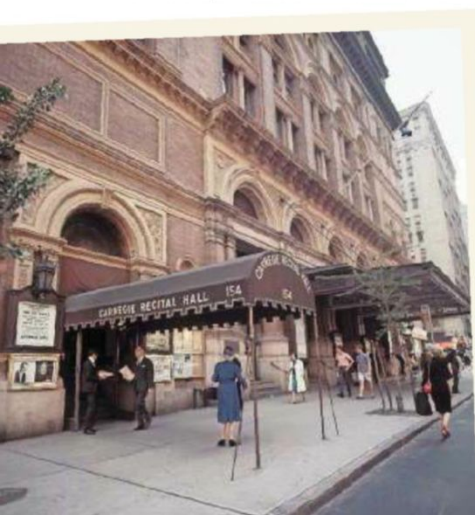
"He scared me to death," Simone said. "It was like he just took over, and I'm glad of that."

His nearness made her feel safe, and she needed reassurance. A club booking a month earlier at New York's Roundtable had proved a disaster. The venue was one of those places where the clientele went to be seen and appreciated. Nina found herself facing an onslaught of off-stage noise that reduced her to mainly providing instrumentals – attempting vocals proved a pointless exercise.

By night three, Nina could stand no more of the disrespect. "Pack up," she told her accompanying trio. "Don't worry about wages, I'll pay you for the week." Then she headed for the door.

At this time, the first copies of Nina's latest album for Colpix, *Forbidden Fruit*, were also up for review. Billboard provided a four-star review and asserted: "Nina Simone's unique vocal style is in soft rapport

"IT IS USELESS TO MEASURE MISS SIMONE BY ANY NARROW STANDARDS."



with the ballads and blues on this LP. There are many rather unusual items in the set like Oscar Brown Jr's Rags And Old Iron, Gin House Blues, Nat Adderley's swinging Work Song and the title tune... there are spots which spotlight the gal's powerful piano technique. The set should go well with her many fans and could make a distinctive pop-jazz item."

However, the album only sold moderately, failing to match the success of its predecessor, *Nina At Newport*, which had reached Number 23 on the Billboard chart. Sadly, that 1960 long-player would be the only one Simone would ever contribute to the US pop listings.

Her marriage to Stroud, though long-term, also proved to be an ordeal, one that crashed to earth as early as her engagement party, when Stroud, who'd consumed more than his fair share of rum during the evening, beat her up.

But Nina's love affair with Carnegie Hall continued. She was there again in 1961, appearing at a New Year's night concert which featured her alongside John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk and Sonny Rollins. However, she had to wait until April 12, 1963 before making her solo debut at the hall, an event documented on a fine live album released by Colpix. 1964's *In Concert* was also recorded at the famed Midtown Manhattan venue.

Nina's friendship with Miriam Makeba would also endure across the years. Makeba, The Empress Of African Song, suggested that Simone, The High Priestess Of Soul, live in Liberia in the '70s, and in 1991 they collaborated on record.

And after Nina Simone died on April 21, 2003, Makeba was there for the funeral. "She was not only an artist," she said of her peer. "She was also a freedom fighter."

Fred Dellar

ALSO THIS MONTH

MANC GETS JAZZ MESSAGE

6 Art Blakey (above) And The Jazz Messengers, including Lee Morgan (trumpet), Wayne Shorter (tenor sax), Bobby Timmons (piano) and Jymie Merritt (bass), play at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester.

BOB JOBS

6 Bob Dylan plays the Indian Neck Folk Festival. Staying at the Montowese Hotel in Branford, Connecticut, he also tapes three Woody Guthrie songs - Talking Columbia, Hangknot Slipknot and Talking Fish Blues.

GENE WHIZ

7 Gene Vincent is the first US star to feature on ABC-TV's Thank Your Lucky Stars, miming to She She Little Sheila. Vincent is touring the UK.

RICKY LOSES Y

8 Ricky Nelson turns 21 and changes his stage name to Rick.

EVERLY AFTER

19 The Everly Brothers launch their own record label, Calliope. They intend "to discover and develop new talent" but their own records will still be released by Warner Bros.

LET IT PIP

21 Two versions by the same act of Every Beat Of My Heart enter the US Hot 100. One, on Fury, is credited to Gladys Knight; the Jay label's is credited to The Pips. Both are by Gladys Knight And The Pips, but recorded at different times.

MARTY HEARTY

25 Marty Wilde stars as Conrad Birdie, an Elvis-like rock star, in US musical Bye Bye Birdie, which opens in the UK at the Opera House, Manchester.

CHUCK LUCK

31 Chuck Berry opens Berry Park, an amusement park in Wentzville, Missouri, near St. Louis. At 30 acres, it has a miniature golf course, a swimming pool, a Ferris wheel, a children's zoo, a picnic area and a ballroom.



'SOVIETS INVENTED JAZZ' CLAIM

MAY 22 Billboard reports that Russian band leader

Alexander Utyosov - though they might mean entertainer Leonid Utyosov - has made a bold claim about jazz. In East Berlin newspaper Freie Welt, he argues that "What some people now call 'Dixie-land' music was played for many years in Odessa, in our Socialist Motherland, before being called to life in New Orleans." He does admit, though, that the USSR has rather lost the knack and wants to import US records in order to "Sovietise" them.



FOLKIES SET FREE

MAY 14 Mayor Robert Wagner lifts the ban on folk singers congregating in New York's Washington Square. The Village Voice reports that "hundreds of guitar-twangers, yodellers and their friends" descended on the forum, the final tally proving in excess of 5,000. No rules were enforced, though one Police Commissioner told the singers to "keep in tune and keep your beards combed."

TOP TEN

NEW ZEALAND SINGLES MAY 12

- 1 SURRENDER** ELVIS PRESLEY RCA
- 2 WALK RIGHT IN THE** EVERLY BROTHERS WARNER BROS
- 3 YOU'RE SIXTEEN** JOHNNY BURNETTE LONDON
- 4 CALENDAR GIRL** NEIL SEDAKA RCA
- 5 EMOTIONS** BRENDA LEE FESTIVAL
- 6 ARE YOU SURE THE** ALLISONS FONTANA
- 7 PEPE DUANE** EDDY LONDON
- 8 AM I LOSING YOU?** JIM REEVES RCA
- 9 WILL YOU LOVE ME TOMORROW?** THE SHIRELLES TOP RANK
- 10 LAZY RIVER** BOBBY DARIN LONDON

Brenda Lee, emoting at Number 5.



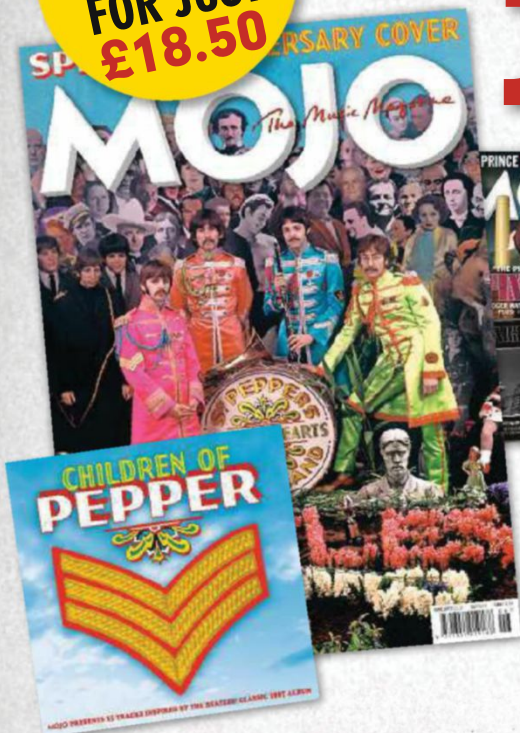
AD ARCHIVE 1961



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1936-2017

BREEZIN'

Producer, A&R, executive and music lover Tommy LiPuma died on March 13.

Tommy LiPuma was in his middle twenties, plying the family trade of barbering in Cleveland, when he took a pay cut to pack records for a local distributor. It was the first step in a long and stellar career, but he did not forget the loading bay lessons of what made a successful release.

A figure of energy and taste who found his vocation when listening to jazz and R&B radio, he moved to Los Angeles to work as a plugger for Liberty Records in 1961. His habit of sitting in on studio sessions led to demo production, where he made the

Tommy LiPuma: a legendary figure of energy and taste.

acquaintance of singers and sessioners including Randy Newman and Leon Russell. His first production hit was The O'Jays' 1965 hit *Lipstick Traces (On A Cigarette)*; soon after, he was made staff producer at A&M, where his successes included The Sandpipers' 1966 Top 10 hit *Guantanamera* (LiPuma also gave the wiggly mid-section narration). Cognisant of changing tastes, in 1968 he co-founded Blue Thumb Records, where he helmed albums by Dave Mason, Dan Hicks and Gabor Szabo. LiPuma's honed pop sensibility was arguably more apparent as the '70s progressed, with his work on Barbra Streisand's Number 1 *The Way We Were* (1974) and George Benson's Grammy-bagging *Breezin'* (1976). After more quality studio dates for Warners – in the next 15 years, he would produce Bill Evans, Miles Davis, Al Jarreau, Dr. John, Randy

Newman, Everything But The Girl and Aztec Camera – he attained a zenith of sorts with Natalie Cole's *Unforgettable With Love*, 1991's multi-platinum winner of six Grammys.

LiPuma also held a variety of executive positions at Elektra, Verve and Warners, but he never abdicated his studio role: late-period credits include albums for Paul McCartney, Willie Nelson and Diana Krall. An art collector and raconteur, in 1999 he memorably explained his philosophy to *Performing Songwriter* magazine. "The most important thing, and it's still something that's my credo today, is material... a friend of mine once used an expression and I use it all the time now – you can't turn horseshit into ice cream. You got to have the goods, otherwise, all these elements don't mean anything."

Ian Harrison

"YOU GOT TO HAVE THE GOODS."

THEY ALSO SERVED

SOUL voice **JONI SLEDGE** (b.1956) sang in church in Philadelphia before joining her siblings in *Sister Sledge*. They achieved worldwide fame with 1979's *We Are Family*, whose hits included *Lost In Music*, which Joni sang. They would record seven more albums and hit UK Number 1 in 1985 with Frankie. Later achievements included singing for President Clinton and Pope Francis.

COMPOSER and multi-instrumentalist **ALESSANDRO ALESSANDRONI** (b.1925) wrote for TV before moving into film. Working with **Ennio Morricone**, his guitar, whistling and the singing of his I Cantori Moderni group can be heard on spaghetti westerns including *The Good, The Bad And The Ugly*. Alessan-

droni also wrote his own soundtracks, including *Killer Nun* and *The Devil's Nightmare*, plus library music.

JAZZER **LUCKY GORDON** (b.1931) emigrated from Jamaica to Britain in 1948; sometime lover of showgirl **Christine Keeler**, he found infamy for his role in the Profumo affair in 1963. He later worked as a factotum/chef at the Basing Street studios of Island Records: in the '80s he lent his scat vocals to a mix of **Art Of Noise**'s *Moments In Love*. At one point, he proposed Island pressmen Neil Storey and Rob Partridge write a book of his recipes, though the project was abandoned when it became clear that Gordon expected them to pay him for the privilege.

PHOTOGRAPHER **DON HUNSTEIN** (b.1928) worked in Columbia Records' photo library when his skill as a lensman was recognised. From the late '50s to 1986, he shot memorable images of musicians including **Duke Ellington**, **Johnny Cash**, **Miles Davis**, **John Coltrane**, **Aretha Franklin** and, often, **Bob Dylan**.

SINGER **ROSIE HAMLIN** (b.1945) wrote and sang **Rosie & The Originals** 1960 US Number 5 gem *Angel Baby* when she was just 14. After a short flush of fame she retired, returning to recording and live work in the '70s. Her signature song

was loved by **John Lennon**, who covered it in 1975 and ad-libbed, "Send my love to Rosie, wherever she may be."

LENNON confidant **PETE SHOTTON** (b.1941) was friends with John from when they were pupils at Dovedale Infant School in Liverpool. He played washboard with

The Quarrymen, ran a supermarket financed by Lennon, managed the Apple Boutique and was managing director of Apple Corps.

ENGINEER and techno pioneer **IKUTARO KAKEHASHI** (b.1930) founded Japanese instrument and amplifier manufacturers Ace Tone in 1960. In 1972, in Osaka, he founded the Roland Corporation. Roland's hardware would include the TR-808 and TR-909 drum machines and the TB-303 bass generator, without which electronic dance music from the '80s onward would have been unthinkable. He also proposed the MIDI standard. His 2002 biography was entitled *I Believe In Music*.

Clive Prior

Joni Sledge: soul sister.





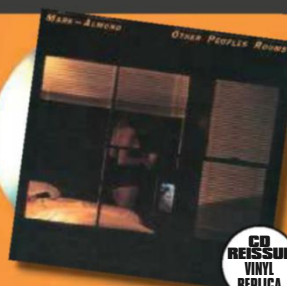
180 GRAM
VINYL

810543
BILLY PAUL 360 DEGREES OF BILLY PAUL
1972. Produced by Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff and arranged by Bobby Martin, Lenny Pakula and Norman Harris, this album includes the Grammy Award-winning number 1 pop and soul single "Me and Mrs. Jones" and its follow-up "Am I Black Enough for You?" which reached number 29 on the soul chart and number 79 on the pop chart. Philadelphia International Records



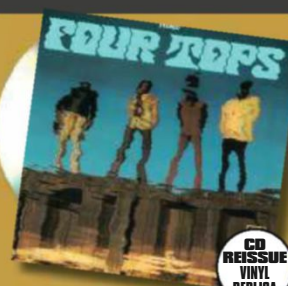
180 GRAM
VINYL

810542
MFSB MFSB 1973. The debut album by Philadelphia International Records houseband MFSB (Mother Father Sister Brother), which was a pool of more than thirty studio musicians based at Philadelphia's famed Sigma Sound Studios. Produced by Kenny Gamble, Leon Huff and Thom Bell, and backed up such groups as Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, The O'Jays, The Stylistics, The Spinners, Wilson Pickett, and Billy Paul, among others, this album generated the "Philadelphia Sound". Philadelphia International Records



CD
REISSUE
VINYL
REPLICA

88508
MARK ALMOND OTHER PEOPLE'S ROOMS
The long unavailable and highly underrated masterpiece Other People's Rooms by The Mark-Almond Band. Other People's Rooms climbed to #32 on Billboard's album chart when it first appeared in 1978. Produced by Tommy LiPuma. Horizon Music



CD
REISSUE
VINYL
REPLICA

88502
FOUR TOPS STILL WATERS RUN DEEP
Produced by longtime Norman Whitfield associate Frank Wilson, the album returned the Four Tops to the top forty on the album charts where it peaked at number twenty-one, yielding the popular Top 30 hits, "Still Water (Love)" (#11), which was co-written by Smokey Robinson, and their cover of "It's All in the Game" (#24). Motown



180 GRAM
VINYL

810541
GLADYS KNIGHT & THE PIPS IMAGINATION
The eleventh studio album by American R&B group Gladys Knight & the Pips, includes their only Billboard Hot 100 No.1 hit, "Midnight Train to Georgia", which also reached No.1 on the R&B singles chart. The album produced more singles: "I've Got to Use My Imagination" and "Best Thing That Ever Happened to Me", with both songs peaking at No.1 on the R&B singles chart and top five on the Billboard Hot 100. Buddah Records



180 GRAM
VINYL

810540
PAUL WINTER & CARLOS LYRA THE SOUND OF IPANEMA
Recorded in Rio de Janeiro, it features Lyra's compositions and includes the essential Brazilian combo of that period: Sérgio Mendes (piano), Sebastião Neto (bass), and Milton Banana (drums). The Sound of Ipanema is a delightfully fresh album, symbol of the golden years of Bossa Nova. Columbia



CD
REISSUE
VINYL
REPLICA

88507
BARRY WHITE TOGETHER BROTHERS
Highly underrated soundtrack written, produced and arranged by Barry White for the 1974 includes arrangements by The Love Unlimited Orchestra as well as background vocals by The Love Unlimited, the female vocal trio lead by White's wife Glodean James. This album was Barry White's entry into the blaxploitation soundtrack genre. 20TH Century Records



CD
REISSUE
VINYL
REPLICA

88506
THE UNDISPUTED TRUTH FACE TO FACE WITH THE TRUTH
Released in 1971: Face to Face with the Truth. Produced by Norman Whitfield. Two singles were released from the album: "You Make Your Own Heaven and Hell Right Here on Earth", and "What It Is". Notable musicians were present on the sessions, including Dennis Coffey on lead guitar, Earl Van Dyke on piano, and Eddie Brown on bongos, among others. Gordy Records

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JOHN MORELAND / BIG BAD LUV

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4AD



A graduate of Birmingham's blues clubs, her songwriting and harmonic joy helped make Fleetwood Mac one of the biggest acts in the world. Then, she withdrew... "I just shut myself off," admits a fully returned Christine McVie.

Interview by **ANDREW MALE** • Portrait by **TOM SHEEHAN**

"I'M SORRY," SHOUTS CHRISTINE McVIE FROM the kitchen, as she rummages for mugs under the sink, "it's a rented flat, and everything's still in storage." They're words that conjure up a cheerless one-bedroom studio with wipe-clean beige walls and collapsed sofa bed, but for Christine McVie, 73-year-old singer-songwriter and on-off veteran of Fleetwood Mac, one of the biggest-selling bands of all time, the flat is a penthouse in Belgravia, decorated with antique Turkish carpets, giant African drums and, hanging in the drawing room, Edward Reginald Frampton's 1898 Pre-Raphaelite masterpiece, *Saint Cecilia With Angels*. "It looks like she's playing a Hammond B3, doesn't it?" smiles McVie, pointing at the spinet in the painting, a nod to her own early years, when as art student Christine Perfect she played keyboards in late-'60s Brummie blues outfits *Sounds Of Blue* and *Chicken Shack*.

Today, McVie's look is a designer variant on Brumbeat beatnik; grown-out blonde bob, blue jeans, white T-shirt and black leather jacket, and her Smethwick drawl is still audible beneath a warm, measured voice with the same low blue tones that have coloured such soulful Mac belters down the years as *Say You Love Me*, *Don't Stop* and *Little Lies*.

Indeed, Mac history is all around us, McVie's walls bedecked with early photos of herself with band founder and drummer Mick

Fleetwood, and bassist and one-time husband John McVie. There's tour posters from the early-'70s Bob Welch years, and a plethora of platinum record updates on the 30-million-plus sales of the band's 1977 LP *Rumours*. Recorded with LA conscripts Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks, the album set in motion 20 years of intra-band dance, dalliance and excess, and finally ended for McVie when she walked away from the group in 1998, exhausted and disillusioned, with a dream of living quietly in the Kent countryside.

Today she positively beams when discussing the band, especially her surprise return to the fold at the O2 Arena in September 2013 that led to the *On With The Show* world tour ("There was nothing bad about that tour. Everything was a joy!") and the resultant reunion sessions with Buckingham, Fleetwood and McVie that have resulted in a buoyant new "duets" album, *Lindsey Buckingham Christine McVie*, recorded in Studio D at Village Recorders in Los Angeles, the same custom-designed annex the Mac had built, at ludicrous expense, for the recording of *Tusk*, some 39 years ago.

"Lindsey gets me," says McVie, happily, "and I love working with him. As with everything in Fleetwood Mac, it's chemistry. I feel like I've come home. The prodigal daughter returns."

So, how did Lindsey Buckingham Christine McVie come about?

I'd rejoined the band, after being retired for 16 years, and I had a phone call from Lindsey ➤

WE'RE NOTWORTHY

Field Music's Peter Brewis on Christine McVie's "disguised drama".



"My favourite Christine McVie song is *Think About Me* from *Tusk*. It's just full of dignified emotion and disguised drama. Her love songs are never trite. A song like *Everywhere* is so beautiful and yet really simple. It's that deceptive simplicity that we all aspire to."

◀ saying, "If you're going to do that Chris you gotta commit." He's very hardline. I said, "I'm committing!" And I did. I worked out, I started writing songs, I sent Lindsey some demos, and he did his magic on them. It never occurred to us anything would happen in terms of an album. Then we thought it was a good way of getting me back into the swing of things for the upcoming Fleetwood Mac tour. We got some studio time, Lindsey brought in some songs he'd recorded with John and Mick a few years back, and before we knew it we had, like, six or seven songs. We shelved them, because we had to rehearse to go on the road, then we just pulled them back out a few months ago and decided to make it a proper duets album.

Had those original six or seven tracks been intended for the next Fleetwood Mac album?

That might have been how the press were presenting it, but we really had no project in mind at that time. The songs were sounding great, so we just kept on going.

You've got John on there, Mick on there... There'll be people asking why Stevie isn't present? Couldn't this have easily been the next Fleetwood Mac album?

We just decided this was a finite project, not a career move. It was a wise move, from that point of view, because Stevie was busy anyway, and we were happy with what we were doing. I'm thinking, "Why on earth did we never do this before?" We've all done solo projects, but we've never done a duets album like this.

It's not a normal duets album though. As ever with Christine McVie, it's all about harmonies, and pathos.

We definitely love harmonies, and, yeah, I'm good at pathos. I write about romantic despair a lot. That's my thing, but with a positive spin.

Going back to your musical education, your dad was a violinist and a music teacher.

What was the first music you remember in the house?

Classical. My dad aspired to be first violinist in the orchestra. His dad played the pipe organ in Westminster Abbey, pre-World War One, and when he died, dad had to pick up the mantle of earning money for the family. He got a job as a teacher but always wanted to be a solo violinist. I'd hear him rehearsing in the front room, playing Brahms, Schubert, Handel, in order to play in the orchestra. He never reached the pinnacle of his dreams.

What was the first piece of music you felt was yours?

My brother, who was four years older than me, was into jazz. He had a saxophone at an early age. I had piano lessons. Well, I was playing piano one day and I looked in the piano stool and there was a music book of Fats Domino. Because I could sight-read I started playing the boogie bass. I got hooked on it, then I just got hooked on the blues. Even today, the songs I write use that left hand, it's rooted in the blues.

Your family wanted you to be an art teacher. Was that ever an option?

No. My heart wasn't in it. I had a propensity for it, though. I got a scholarship to Moseley Art School, where we did three academic lessons a week. The rest was silverwork, dress design and needlecraft. Perfect for a future career in Fleetwood Mac. That got me to art college, where I chose sculpture, took my National Diploma in Design and ended up being a window dresser in London, at Dickens And Jones. A pal of mine from art school, Andy Sylvester, was walking past their window one day, recognised me and said, "Hey, we're trying to form this blues band, Chicken Shack. Are you interested in playing piano?"

You'd already been in a band with Andy at art college, Sounds Of Blue. What were they like? Strict blues, no songwriting. Andy was a blues

freak, and had tons of 45s. We'd just dragged up some lovely old blues no one had ever heard and we ended up making a record. I did Etta James' I Would Rather Go Blind, which was a hit. I actually won Female Vocalist Of The Year in the Melody Maker, over Julie Driscoll. But there was really only her, Sandy Denny and me at that point. There were no women.

You also played with Spencer Davis...

We were friends, although not boyfriend and girlfriend. We'd go round together. He'd have his 12-string and we'd sing in folk clubs, on buses. Then, he formed The Spencer Davis Group with Steve Winwood and everyone moved to London. After I joined Chicken Shack, I learned a few licks from [American R&B pianist] Sonny Thompson, who played on a lot of Freddie King records. Then I started improvising. It was a few years before I started writing.

If we went back in a time machine and watched Christine Perfect on-stage, what would we think?

Very shy. I didn't know how I'd got to that place, I didn't know what I was doing, it didn't come naturally, and I didn't have any belief in myself. I didn't aspire to be on the stage, playing piano, let alone singing, because I never thought I had much of a voice. But, my option was window-dresser or jump off the cliff and try this. So I jumped off the cliff.

You were signed to Blue Horizon. How important was it being on that label?

Really important. It was a small record company, like a little family and [label founder] Mike Vernon was our daddy. It was a fantastic time and Fleetwood Mac were on that label too so I started playing a bit of undercover piano on their records as well.

You'd met John by then.

Yeah. We dated, then we stopped dating, then we dated again. They went to Europe, then

A LIFE IN PICTURES

Christine McVie: from Shack to Mac.

1 Perfect start: Christine after picking up Melody Maker's as Number One Girl Singer award, September 17, 1969, Waldorf Hotel, London.

2 With Chicken Shack, 1968 (from left) Stan Webb, Andy Sylvester, Dave Bidwell, Christine. They'd have a Top 20 UK hit when she covered Etta James's I'd Rather Go Blind.

3 Say you love me: Fleetwood Mac reinvigorated in LA in 1975 with (from left) new members Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham, Mick Fleetwood, Christine, her then-husband John McVie.

4 "We started being a bit more adventurous": Mac in Hollywood celebrate *Heroes Are Hard To Find* in 1974 (from left) McVie, Fleetwood, guitarist Bob Welch, who'd joined in '71 for *Future Games*, and Christine.

5 Ready to make sweet music: Lindsey and Christine in Los Angeles,

1988 celebrate Fleetwood's wedding to Sara Recor.

6 Keep it in the family: Christine with her father Cyril, January 1984. "He taught, but always wanted to be first violinist in an orchestra."

7 Show me a smile: Christine, a Blue Horizon artist with Chicken Shack. "I'd started playing undercover piano on Fleetwood Mac records as well."



came back and very shortly after that he proposed to me. All the girls loved Peter Green, but I got to talk to John in a bar somewhere and he charmed me. I thought he was just wonderful – shy, but funny as well – and I fell madly in love with him. But we found that we were meeting on the doorstep, him coming home, me going out with Chicken Shack. So I said, “The marriage is more important.” I took time off until I was asked to join Fleetwood Mac. It was fantastic. It was only really when the bottle reared its ugly head that John and I started to drift away from each other.

When you first saw Fleetwood Mac on-stage, what did they have that you found so attractive?

Chemistry. Kick-ass chemistry. It was phenomenal. Andy and I, any time we had a night off, we’d make a beeline to Fleetwood Mac. These small, sweaty clubs. Mick and John were a force to be reckoned with, and you had little Jeremy Spencer playing slide, doing lots of Elmore James stuff, Peter Green who was like Jesus, playing out-of-this-world guitar, and then [later, guitarist] Danny Kirwan, who played brilliantly technical blues. It was just killer to watch them. Killer.

When Peter Green had his breakdown, was it a surprise?

I was shocked, but I think Mick and John had sensed something when they were recording [1969’s] *Then Play On*. He was starting to shift. His songs became very dark, very morose and introverted. That was the beginning of both his genius and the path towards his demise, although that wasn’t his fault, when he was spiked by those rich kids in that German schloss. He literally never came back. They were under contract to make another record, so Mick decided they should rent a place in the country and work on songs for the album that became

Kiln House, which I did the cover for. By then, I was married to John, Mick was married to Jenny [Boyd], Jeremy was married, Danny was married, and we all moved into this rustic oast house in Kent and they started working on the album. I was there, just drawing, doodling, cooking, smoking a lot of pot. One day Mick and John came up and said, “We think we need another musician. How would you feel about joining the band?” That was like 10 days before they went on the road. I knew the songs so I just came chiming in with my piano, did a couple of harmonies with Danny and Jeremy, that was it.

“I’m good at pathos. I write about romantic despair a lot. That’s my thing, but with a positive spin.”

The first album where you’re credited as a proper band member was *Future Games* in 1971. Did it feel like you were moving away from the blues into a different new sound?

Yeah, I think so. We started being a bit more adventurous. Trying different things. Then Bob [Welch] joined [on guitar in 1971]. He had a West Coast, Wes Montgomery jazz sound that had a really great feel to it, and I just started harmonising with him.

Which became the root of what people now call “the classic Fleetwood Mac sound”...

Well, yes, because in the past no one did harmonies. I remember saying to Danny Kirwan, “Harmonies?” And he’d be, “Ooh no

no! I don’t want harmonies!” So it was only really with Bob that we started to develop a three-part harmony vibe. Mick was very supportive, and it worked. Bob had this honey voice, and so did I. We sounded great together and worked well in the studio, me at the piano and him on guitar. Mick would make sure Bob stayed within the boundaries of a commercial song, because, given the chance, Bob could just take off into space.

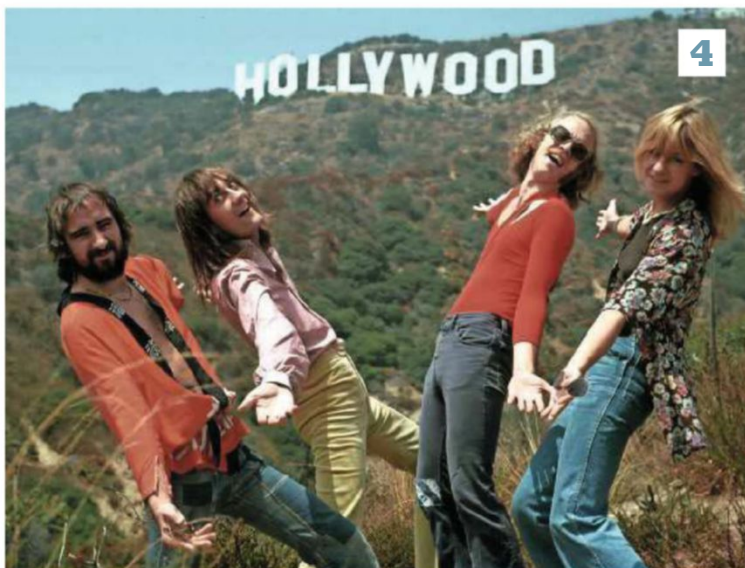
1974 sounds like tumultuous year. Your manager Clifford Davis claimed he owned the name and recruited a new band, the “other Fleetwood Mac”...

Eurgh! Nobody knew what was going on. I just drifted with the strongest wind. My marriage to John was kaput by then. We were living together but no... because of (*mimes drinking*). There was also that tawdry affair where [guitarist] Bob Weston slept with Mick’s wife. That was very acrimonious and obviously Bob had to be sacked. Then [short-lived vocalist] Dave Walker was asked to leave. We’d done one album together, *Penguin* [in 1973], and Remember Me was a great song, but I can’t quite remember how it all

happened. That was the point where we all decided to move to America. We were only planning to go there for three months, get a record deal, get on the road and make some money. Then Bob Welch decided he couldn’t see any future in Fleetwood Mac, so left to go solo.

And Mick started hunting around for new band members...

He went to the Valley, the studio where he heard Lindsey, and thought, “Fuck who is this brilliant guitar player?” The engineer said, “Oh, it’s this couple who’ve just finished this duet album.” So Mick got the number of Lindsey and said, “How would you feel about ➤



Christine McVie, surrounded by Mac family portraits, London, March 2017: "We can see the funny side now. It was hell, but I wouldn't change a day of it."



"As with everything in Fleetwood Mac, it's **chemistry**. I feel like I've come home. **Prodigal daughter** returns."

◀ maybe joining Fleetwood Mac?" and Lindsey says, "We come as a couple." So, somehow, we meet up in this Mexican restaurant and... it was that chemistry, and it started round that table. Then we had another meeting at Mick's house, then we went into rehearsals. I started playing them Say You Love Me on the piano, and we got to the chorus and the two of them just chirped into the perfect three-part harmony. I just remember thinking, "This is it!" Then Lindsey picked up his guitar, Mick his drumsticks, John his bass and it happened like that (clicks fingers).

You never wanted to move to America. How was the shift?

It was to save the band, and once there I didn't mind it much. We were living in relative pauper-ville in Laurel Canyon, in John Mayall's house for two months, then we found an apartment down the hill and gradually started to make a bit of money and then moved to Malibu where we started recording 'The White Album' [1975's *Fleetwood Mac*], driving to the valley every day from the beach. We were in a real bubble then. I was so overawed by these guys as writers that I stepped my game up. I wanted to impress them.

Did your songwriting change at this time?

I've always written about me but I've always written about other people as well; when you hear a couple going through trauma, you try and step into their shoes. So, some songs would be about me, and some really weren't about me, but *Rumours*, that album is *all* about us. The whole band. That's how we were. Something that isn't tangible drove us on to do it. We wrote those songs despite ourselves, because that was the only way we could describe what we were going through.

I'm guessing none of you were in therapy at that time?

No, no. We all are now. You've hit the nail on the head. It was a therapeutic move. The only way we could get this stuff out was to say it, and it came out in a way that was difficult. Imagine trying to sing those songs on-stage with the people you're singing them about. It was difficult for Stevie to sing *Dreams*, difficult for Lindsey to sing *Go Your Own Way*, difficult for me to sing *Don't Stop*, about John. Oh Daddy was about Mick and Jenny. We just gave each other goosebumps, and it was definitely a trial, and of course you've also got to remember we were all very high. I mean, I don't think there was a sober day.

A different kind of logic applies, doesn't it?

No logic. We just ploughed forth into it. A lot of

cocaine, a lot of alcohol, a lot of marijuana. I don't know how that record came to be as good as it is. All of us were there, every day, for almost a year. Me and John didn't get on. Stevie and Lindsey didn't get on, but they still had to go into the studio and do vocals together. And always there, Mick, the rock, even though he was a mess as well.

It's been well documented what effect the excess had on you, but what effect did success have on you?

We were in suspended disbelief. We knew the album was good the moment it was mastered, but we were going through hell ourselves. 'The White Album' had done really well, so we knew we'd have some success, but it just went berserk. It took over our lives. We were dumbfounded. The chemistry between the five of us was the only thing that held it together: "This is Fleetwood Mac. Fleetwood Mac doesn't break up." We can sort of see the funny side now, but it was hell. We got through it and, thankfully, we're all intact. It seems unreal to me now, sitting here, sane, relatively. But I wouldn't change a day of it.

***Tusk*, which followed in '79, is generally regarded as Lindsey's album...**

Well, I think Mick was worried Lindsey might leave if we didn't give him leeway to be



more... experimental, so that's what we did. We didn't realise it would end up being a double album, but I look back on it with great affection. We were still pretty stoned then. Walking back into the Village to do this new album was great. It was great to be there sober.

Coming to *Mirage* three years after *Tusk*, it felt like you'd purposefully created this safe space for the band...

That was Mick's idea, so we could get back to that bubble idea again, something like we did in Sausalito with *Rumours*: see what would come out from a confined space, pull the reins in and do something more commercial. I'm not sure it worked. Strange record. I don't have many memories of it, although the room I was in was meant to have been haunted by [author] George Sand. Me and [producer] Ken Caillat would sit in the studio in the night with a bottle of Courvoisier waiting to see if there were any noises. Nothing came.

After your marriage to Eddy Quintela in '86 you started writing songs together.

(Grimaces) Yeah. That's... not an area I want to talk about. Let's just say that (laughs)... I wrote most of the songs. Little Lies was very much my song, and it's not about me, and it's not about Eddy. It's just a song I wrote, lying out by my pool with a pad and paper and that's what I came up with. Counter-vocals written across Lindsey's tune and... I just kind of made it up.

There's a track called *Liar* on your 2004 solo album, *In The Meantime*. Any relation?

Well, that is about somebody, but I don't want to talk about them, either. Another failed relationship. Not to worry, these things are better in than out. Bad Journey, off the same album, was another song about this other man. I'd rather not name names but if it makes a good song, great. Then it's not inside you any more.

What was the trigger for leaving Fleetwood

BEYOND PERFECT

Christine McVie, in and out of the Mac. By **Andrew Male**.

EARLY SOLO

Christine Perfect

Christine Perfect

(BLUE HORIZON, 1970)

★★★★



"A half-hearted project," says McVie. "I didn't feel confident in a solo world." Despite her harsh judgement, there's a desolate beauty to much of this first solo effort, especially the Nico-esque chill of *When You Say* and a lovely cover of Ike & Tina Turner's *Crazy 'Bout You Baby*. "That's my favourite track," admits McVie, "I heard that recently and thought, Little Hohner transistor piano, under-produced, that sounds so good!"

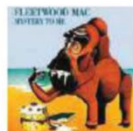
EARLY MAC

Fleetwood Mac

Mystery To Me

(REPRISE, 1973)

★★★★



Still underrated, the Mac LPs McVie and Bob Welch made together – of which this is the undoubted standout – have a mellow West Coast jazz dreaminess and hazy harmonic beauty that points towards Mac's future reinvention and sounds eerily akin to proto-Steely Dan. "I love Steely Dan," says McVie. "Of course, we were doing that sound before them. I wonder if we *were* an influence?"

LATE MAC

Fleetwood Mac

Tango In The Night

(WARNER BROS, 1987)

★★★★



"I'm very good at coming up with lyrics, songs and hooks, and Lindsey is very good at making it 3D," says McVie. As Mark Blake astutely pointed out in *MOJO* 282, *Tango In The Night* is a perfect Mac showcase for McVie and Buckingham's musical partnership, the album's two real pop highlights – *Everywhere* and *Little Lies* – both written by her and given that added extra dimension by his studio magic.

LATE SOLO

Christine McVie

In The Meantime

(SANCTUARY, 2004)

★★★★



"That was therapy," says McVie, of this deeply personal solo LP. Pro-Tooled with her nephew Dan, as she languished in the English countryside. "I was coming out of a relationship and just got it all off my chest. It's about the darkest thing I've ever written... I was completely paranoid and uncomfortable doing it. I don't think it sold anything but the point was to prove I could still write, still play, still sing."

Mac in 1998? Did it have anything to do with the Mac albums that preceded it, *Behind The Mask* (1990) and *Time* ('95)?

I don't think anyone likes those albums. They're terrible. They're scrubbed under the carpet. Did they have anything to do with it? Yeah, very possibly. Dave Mason [ex Traffic guitarist/vocalist, who joined the Mac from 1993 to '95] and I did *not* get along, and I thought the music was suffering. I think Mick thought it was the end of the road as well, for the first time. Also, I was more gone than them during the making of *Time*. Emotionally not there, physically not here. I just didn't show up. I left Mick and John holding the baby. I couldn't bear watching it all fall apart. And I couldn't keep peace with Dave Mason, I'm afraid. It was very acrimonious with him and I just bailed. Mick and John were OK. Also, I was tired of living out of a suitcase, tired of travel, plus I had a fear of flying. I'd been doing it longer than Stevie and Lindsey and I'd just had enough. Plus, my father was really sick and I wanted to come back to England and rediscover my roots and I was quite adamant that this was what I wanted to do.

It was a total severing of the ties. You sold all your publishing and moved to a 16th century manor house in Kent.

I did sell my publishing, but I made a lot of money from that. That was a deal I'd never get again. Living in Kent was great for the first couple of years, then it drove me mad. I spent three years restoring that house but my marriage ended up not working, so we got divorced and I just found myself on my own, bouncing off the walls in this huge, great big house with two dogs. I became very isolated, very withdrawn, didn't even look at a piano. I just shut myself off. My friends were worried about me. Also, the longer I left the fear of flying, the worse it got. In the end, I completely withdrew, and got myself into some trouble, drinking, not seeing anyone. At that point I thought I've got to do something. So, I found a psychiatrist. He said, "If you could get on a plane, where would you go?" I said, "I'd go to Maui to see Mick." He said, "Book a ticket, first class, for six months' time and let's get you there." Also, he said, "If you don't want to drive your car, just walk over to it, sit in it, say hello to it, get out, go back in." So I did that for a period of two months. Turn the ignition on, another step further, drive round the courtyard... next thing I know, I'm driving again. Then Mick happened to come back to London, so we flew back to Maui together.

What was the flight like?

We spent the whole time talking. I don't even remember the plane taking off. I played in his little blues band over there in Maui, found my feet on stage again. I had retreated completely from society. I got back and I'm better than I ever was. It's rehabilitation, in the best way. The circle is complete.

What would you say to shy window dresser Christine Perfect if you met her now?

I would say, "You're Christine fucking McVie, and don't you forget it!"

Everything has come right?

Everything has come right. But, don't forget, this is Fleetwood Mac. Hey, we should put that on the T-shirts for the next tour: "Everything has come right" on the front and, on the back, "But don't forget, this is Fleetwood Mac!"

Buckingham/McVie's album is released on May 27 and is reviewed on page 88.



screa

*The most ferocious American band of their generation imploded due to endless internal warfare and narcotic excess. Seventeen years after that initial collapse, **At The Drive In** are reunited and ready to face down their past. "We're lucky to be here," they tell **Stevie Chick.***

Photo by
Paul Harries

Honest to a fault: At The Drive In's Omar Rodríguez-López (left) and Cedric Bixler-Zavala on-stage at Underworld, Camden Town, north London, 2000.

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IT'S CLOSE TO FOUR DECADES SINCE Washington DC's 9:30 club first opened its doors as a 200-capacity venue, becoming home to the city's burgeoning 1980s hardcore scene and a regular stop on the US punk touring circuit. These days, the venue is capable of holding six times as many people as its initial backroom incarnation, but it remains a hallowed space to members of El Paso's At The Drive In. Sitting backstage, frontman Cedric Bixler-Zavala is reciting his favourite between-song ad-libs from DC heroes Minor Threat's 1983 concert at the 9:30, immortalised on the Live video, a cornerstone of any self-respecting punk's collection.

Tonight's show sees the band making up for their blow-out at the club last year, when the show was cancelled minutes before stage-time due to a problem with the singer's vocal cords. You could call it defeat-from-the-jaws-of-victory – a recurring motif of the ATDI story. In fact, their 2000 album *Relationship Of Command* seemed poised to drag the ethics, the energy, the ferocious creativity of the entire post-hardcore punk scene into the 21st century, offering up an alternative to the homogenised nu-punk pap of the time. A mere 18 months later, however, At The Drive In were dead and almost buried...

Their story begins in early-'90s El Paso, a mostly Hispanic, mostly working-class Texas border town. El Paso's main punk hangout, the Dead End, is a warehouse running on stolen electricity, putting on shows by crust-punk bands like Scherzo and Antischism. It's here that guitarist Omar Rodriguez-López, a scrawny Puerto Rican kid with dreams of becoming a salsa musician, has been dragged by his buddy, Paul Hinojos. He sees fights, he hears bottles breaking, and he befriends Cedric Bixler-Zavala, two years his senior and as skinny as he is. Omar decides he loves the Dead End and that he loves punk. "That place was so full of *life*," he grins today.

Cedric's own conversion to punk rock came via skateboarding and cable TV screenings of *Another State Of Mind*, the commendably grim 1984 rockumentary of a disastrous Social Distortion tour that climaxed with the band's break-up in DC. "It made me want to do this," says Cedric. "My aunt said, 'Why?? They get paid in pennies!'"

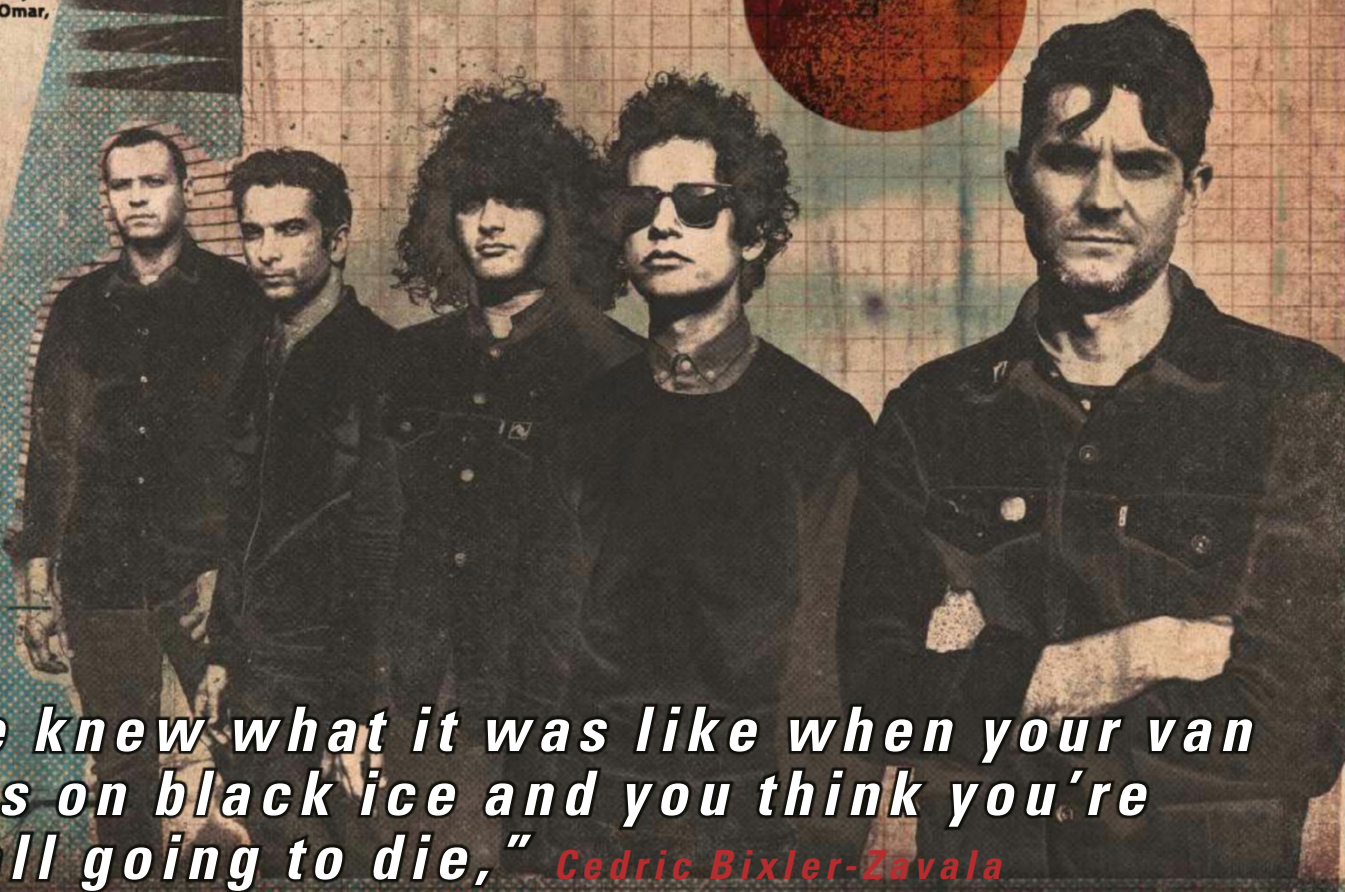
Undaunted, Cedric formed numerous punk bands: Foss, Los Dregtones, At The Drive In. This last band was his most ambitious, uniting him with local guitarist Jim Ward. "I couldn't understand it," remembers Omar, who at that time was a dropout hitchhiking across America. "Jim was college rock, not punk rock; we used to call him 'the Young Republican'." But Ward was driven, and Cedric wanted ATDI to be more than mere "weekend warriors".

Omar returned to El Paso to join the fledgling group as they undertook their first tentative tour, heading to Oakland, California. Typically, the shows they booked fell through. "There's an art to failure," reflects Omar. "We soaked up the energy of the scene there. We got to see where Dead Kennedys played, we stayed up all night, talking until the sun came up. It was romantic. We were seeing this life we'd only read about in [fan-zines] *Book Your Own Fucking Life* and *Maximum Rock'n'Roll*."

Further "disastrous" tours followed; at one LA show, the audience consisted solely of three writers for punk 'zine *Flipside* and Mudhoney drummer Dan Peters. ➤

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Back in gear: ATDI today (from left) Paul Hinojos, Tony Hajjar, Cedric, Omar, Keeley Davis.



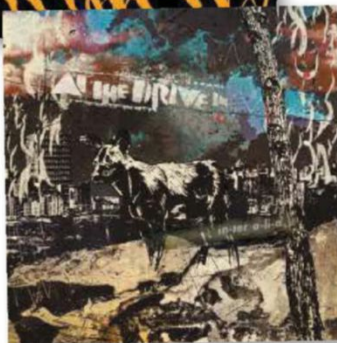
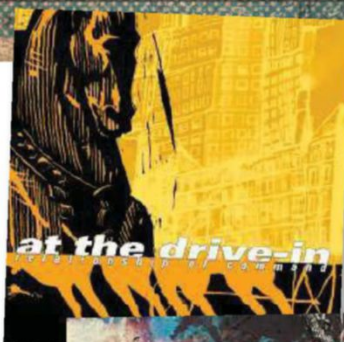
"We knew what it was like when your van skids on black ice and you think you're all going to die," Cedric Bixler-Zavala

◀ "The Mudhoney guy bought our 7-inch, though," smiles Cedric. "Didn't pay the bills, but I was spiritually rich." Meanwhile, Flipside writer Blaze James became their manager, and the group cut their debut album, *Acrobatic Tenement*, for Flipside's label at the end of the tour.

Then, as would happen on various occasions, the band fell apart, and Jim Ward left. Tony Hajjar, a metalhead Chemistry genius about to complete his degree, deferred his studies to play drums; along with incoming bassist Paul Hinojos, this new rhythm section took on the organisational duties. With renewed impetus, they headed back out in a death-trap tour van with no insulation, icicles forming on the ceiling as they slept. A shared bottle of tequila kept them warm at night. Struggling to shift their records at the merch stand, they instead sold Mexican wrestling masks and lethal Faro cigarettes they bought cheap in Juarez. Jim Ward was invited back into the ranks, only to leave again — something he would do repeatedly during the band's history.

Despite their internal volatility, a series of low-budget recordings — in particular, 1998's *In/Casino/Out* LP and 1999's *Vaya* EP — saw the group's sound take shape, foregrounding their complex-but-compelling riffing, intricate rhythms and Cedric's declamatory holler. Out of step with the mid-'90s pop-punk scene, their constant touring began to pay off as they escaped the cycle of 17-band ska-punk all-dayers, touring instead with the likes of the Make-Up, Karp and AFL. "We knew what it was like when your van skids on black ice and you think you're all going to die," says Cedric. "We were serious."

aS THE '90S DREW TO A CLOSE, AT THE DRIVE In controversially began talks with major labels, correctly surmising that as many sharks lurked within the indie scene as in the big league. They signed with dotcom start-up Digital Entertainment Network, who paired them with Ross Rob-



inson, the maverick producer who'd cut landmark nu-metal albums by Korn and Limp Bizkit. ATDI disdained those records but, says Omar, Robinson "got the closest anyone had to capturing our live sound."

Robinson was known for creating a concentrated environment in which artists were invited to wring out their emotions in order to capture the intensity in their performance, and, initially, the sessions at Indigo Ranch in Malibu progressed at lightning pelt. Then, several days in, the mood changed.

"Ross says he wants to start the album over," Tony Hajjar says. "Then he says I'm not playing right, makes me re-track over and over." The presence in the studio of Dave McClain, drummer with San Francisco thrash metal outfit Machine Head and Hajjar's hero, unsettled Tony further. Other band members also expressed their uncertainty at the progress being made, as the atmosphere darkened.

Eventually, the sessions stretched to three bleak months, immediately after which the band hit the road. At the first date, Robinson approached Tony backstage and apologised. "He said he'd got some bad news about a relationship during the sessions, and wanted to keep us there for as long as possible, as he couldn't face it," the drummer alleges. "I broke down in tears. I told him that day, I better never fucking see you again."

The experience didn't augur well. Neither did Digital Entertainment Network's collapse during the sessions, though the group swiftly signed to Beastie Boys' Grand Royal record label. Nevertheless, with its feral intensity, its articulate chaos, when released in late 2000, *Relationship Of Command* was lauded as an inarguably great record by the media, with the anti-anthem One Armed Scissor even garnering airplay. The praise came at a cost.

"We were overworked, over-interviewed," says Hajjar. "The

Clemente Ruiz/Scarlet Page/Camera Press

media were dividing us up into Omar-and-Cedric, and the rest of us.” The singer and guitarist, with their skinny frames and haywire hairdos, cut an iconic swathe amid the big-shorts grimness of turn-of-the-millennium rock. Tony remembers turning up to an Italian TV interview alone and being asked if he’d wear an afro wig. An American rock magazine told Omar and Cedric to pose at the front while Jim, Tony and Paul were meant to pretend to be a three-man mosh-pit. They refused, only to be told: “We asked Korn to wear monkey suits, and they did it.” Hailed as ‘the next Nirvana’, the demands placed upon the band seemed to be willing them on to the same grisly end.

“The repetition of it all caused a certain amount of insanity,” says Omar, recalling the increasingly bleak mood. Their more intimate live shows offered little respite, often grinding to a halt amid violent slam dancing. Adding to their increasing sense of alienation, Cedric and Omar had begun using cocaine and heroin, winning Jim Ward’s enmity. One rare bright spot came when they played Australia’s Big Day Out festival in early 2001. “It was the first time we all had hotel rooms of our own, yet we all ended up in the same room,” says Omar. “Nobody could have appreciated this more than we could, to have a balcony overlooking the ocean. We came from nothing. We’d worked so hard.”

The joy was short-lived. A month later, after a dire show in Holland, they cancelled their forthcoming US tour. “We made this rule: take six months off, don’t even mention the band, get some time away,” says Omar. He and Cedric toured Europe with their dub side-project, DeFacto. The others went home. “Soon, wrongly, I thought I was ready,” says Tony. “Instead of sticking to the six-month rule, I said, ‘Let’s do this.’”

Tony Hajjar chalks it up to bad communication. Omar blames bad management, alleging that there was an attempt to force them into a series of two-week ATDI tours. But when Omar quit the band and formed a new group, The Mars Volta, with Cedric while in Europe, ATDI’s hiatus became indefinite. A chance meeting between Jim Ward and Omar at a gig in San Francisco signalled the end. “Jim said, ‘You’re starting a band, eh? You and Cedric? With you in charge? This I’ve got to see. It’ll be good to watch you fall on your face.’” Omar’s soft features toughen. “I got sober that day. I couldn’t run The Mars Volta while I was still partying. It was like a challenge.”

aS THE MARS VOLTA SET OFF ON THEIR AVANT-prog odyssey, Jim Ward, Tony Hajjar and Paul Hinojos formed Sparta; bad feeling crackled between the two camps. When Paul left Sparta for The Mars Volta in 2005, Tony stopped talking to him and they fell out. Hinojos, however, was determined to heal the rift. “He’d call me every week,” remembers Tony. “Early 2009, I finally took his call. We talked for hours.” The bassist’s emotional maturity won over the rest of his former bandmates, and later that year they met at Omar’s home in Guadalajara. “It went from tears, to yelling, to laughing, to talking, to ‘let’s go eat,’” remembers Tony.

In 2012 a 10-date reunion tour was announced. Tragically, a week before the tour, however, Omar’s mother passed away. “I put my physical body on-stage for those shows,” he says, “but I was not in my body.” Omar’s muted performances won criticism from fans, while his reluctance to curtail his mourning and return to The Mars Volta afterwards caused conflict with Cedric. “I could have handled it a shit-ton better,” Cedric says now. “The birth of my kids [in 2013] really made me grow up.”

The real rapprochement came at a songwriting session in 2014, organised by Hinojos. “He said, ‘Let’s just make some music, the conversations will come easily then,’” says Cedric. He looks over at Omar. “We’re soulmates. We hugged it out.”

Jim Ward, however, was reluctant to commit to new material, forcing the band to split again for almost a year. “It was too painful,” says Hajjar. “I was going to have a heart attack.”

“Jim was holding up the healing process, invalidating it,” says Omar. As a result, the band opted to move on without the guitarist.

A tour was booked for March 2016. “It was like, ‘Who wants to be in the band? A show of hands?’,” says Cedric. Jim declined; ex-Sparta guitarist Keeley Davis stepped in, learning the setlist in days. At The Drive In were back up and running.

SPRINGING ACROSS THE DRUM-KIT, WIELDING his mikestand about the 9:30 stage with righteous authority, the Cedric Bixler-Zavala of 2017 is every bit as restlessly incendiary as 17 years before. The rest of the band are tightly drilled, yet frenetic and mesmerising. At The Drive In’s brand new album, *in*ter a*li*a*, meanwhile, conjures the artfully frenzied attack of *Relationship Of Command* with eerie perfection.

Few bands, you’d imagine, could recapture such mercurial magic, especially with the emotional scars involved. But it’s these very tensions, plus the friendship that bonds them, that make *in*ter a*li*a* such a satisfying resolution to this particular hardcore soap opera.

“The record wouldn’t have been what you hear without all that hard work,” says Tony later, backstage with his bandmates after the show. “We’re all lucky to be here. And at the end of each show, we still hug each other like we haven’t seen each other for six months. Every night.”

“We knew what we wanted to honour with the album,” Cedric says, of reuniting this band of brothers. “Gang mentality. The fucking train’s rolling!”

M



Meeting on minds: (from left) Ward, Omar and Beastie Boy Mike D.

by grand royal appointment

Omar Rodriguez-López on their label bosses, the Beastie Boys.

“WHEN I FIRST moved to the States [from Puerto Rico], I saw the Beasties on the TV, on tour. I didn’t even know what touring was – I was still learning English – but I told my dad, I want to go on tour with these Beastie Boys! He said, ‘Fine, but you have to write them a letter first, to ask them.’ So I sent them a drawing I’d done of their logo and said, ‘Maybe I could do art for you?’ After we signed to Grand Royal, I told Mike D this. He said, ‘Yeah... We never read any of our fan mail...’ (laughs)

“The other Beasties were cool, but I had a chemistry with Mike D. He knew about De Facto, the other band Cedric and I had, and he said Grand Royal should do a DeFacto record, with [Beasties producer] Mario Caldato. To have someone like that take an interest and see the value in something like DeFacto, especially at a time when even our friends didn’t, was awesome.

“By leaving At The Drive In the way I did in 2001, it was my responsibility to go tell Mike, face-to-face – especially as our break-up would mean Grand Royal losing its distribution deal with Virgin. I told Mike, I hope you won’t resent me for this. And he just said, ‘That’s not how I choose to live my life.’ He was completely supportive. He’s the only person who didn’t say, ‘That’s crazy.’ Even my dad was like, ‘That’s crazy, you worked all this time, stay in the band a little longer...’ Mike said, ‘Whatever you do next, let’s take a look at it.’ And it didn’t happen, because they never scored another distribution deal and ended up closing down, but they were going to sign The Mars Volta. I’ve lost contact with him now – but it was a very real relationship.”

As told to Stevie Chick



Let Freedom Ring

Chuck Berry — who died on March 18, aged 90 — didn't only play the guitar just like ringing a bell. He invented a vocabulary that ignited the youth of the globe and shook popular music to its toes — a revolution that resounds today. **David Fricke** salutes rock's first rebel, poet, and mythologist.

"That taut, propulsive integration of lick and rhythm": Chuck Berry, 1926-2017, rock'n'roll singer, guitarist, songwriter, live on-stage in April 1974.

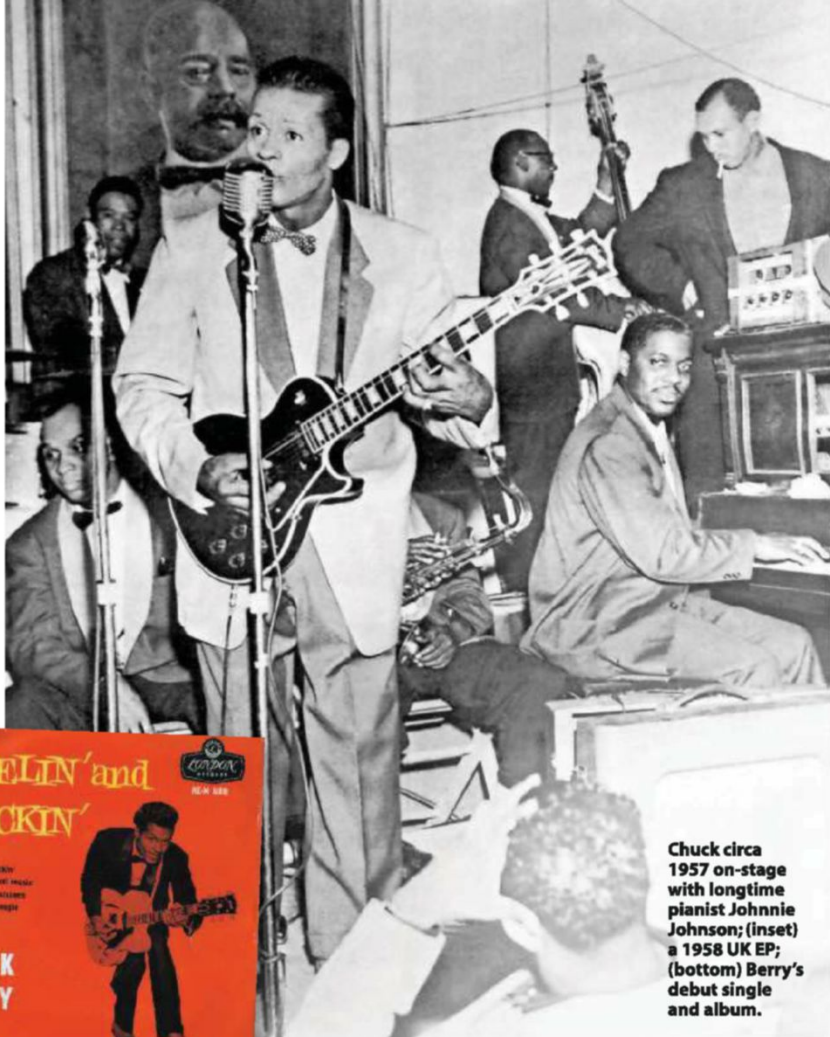


HE LINGO WAS STRICTLY RECORD-BIZ-hipster cheese. The editors misspelled the song title. And the review, published in the July 23, 1955 issue of *Billboard*, appeared in the American music-trade bible's rhythm-and-blues pages, briefly noted under "Best Buy" raves for Muddy Waters' latest blast on Chess Records, *Mannish Boy*, and a new, posthumous single by the recently-late crooner Johnny Ace.

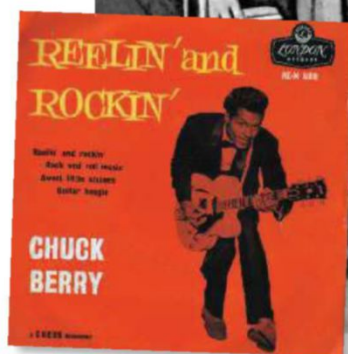
"Berry socks across an unassuming novelty with ace showmanship and expressive good humor," the unbylined writer promised. "The tune has a catchy rhythm and a solid, driving beat. Fine jockey and juke wax." It was Chuck Berry's first appearance in national print, on the occasion of his own Chess debut – and it was not a promising entrance.

Success, of course, was right around the corner, with history on its heels. A Number 1 R&B hit for 11 weeks that summer and fall, *Maybellene* went **Top 5** on *Billboard*'s pop chart and sold over a million. The single immediately changed Berry's life, and then the world around him forever. It was a rock'n'roll year already reeling with teenage upheaval – Bill Haley's 24 weeks in the US chart with *Rock Around The Clock* – and the crossover precedent of R&B smashes by LaVerne Baker, Fats Domino and Bo Diddley.

Yet *Billboard*'s capsule praise for *Maybellene* did not mention pop-radio possibility, white kids with extra lunch money or the name of the composer: Berry himself, whose "unassuming novelty"



Chuck circa 1957 on-stage with longtime pianist Johnnie Johnson; (inset) a 1958 UK EP; (bottom) Berry's debut single and album.



"BERRY HAD BEEN CROSSING OVER - BETWEEN ERAS, GENRES AND SOCIAL BARRIERS - FROM THE BEGINNING."

was a witty, narrative surprise of frustrated lust and serial betrayal rendered in the brand-name specs of a neck-and-neck car chase. Also missing was any reference to the dynamic, illustrative force in Berry's guitar playing. His sharp auto-horn blasts of bent-note treble and urgent, decisive riffing, fired in a chugging hard-rubber twang, were imminent revolution in a nutshell.

Two months earlier, on May 21, Berry – a modestly successful bandleader in his native St Louis, Missouri – had entered Universal Studios in Chicago to make good on a recommendation from Waters, one of his idols, to the bluesman's producer, Leonard Chess. Berry arrived with his thorough rewrite of *Ida Red*, a traditional country song that he had performed in St Louis clubs, putting an R&B momentum to the 1938 Western Swing arrangement by Bob Wills and His *Texas Playboys*. The new title was at Leonard's insistence and either his idea (as in the cosmetics brand, with altered spelling to avoid lawyers) or Berry's (a cartoon cow from his childhood reading). In any case, the memoir in the lyrics was all Berry; as a young buck, he had chased the ladies in a V8 Ford, like his lovestruck cat in *Maybellene*.

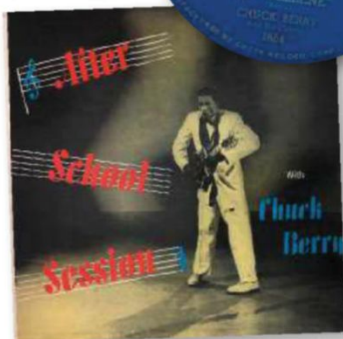
"We struggled through the song," Berry wrote of the session, in his 1988 book *The Autobiography*, "taking 35 tries before completing a track that proved satisfactory to Leonard." That is hard to believe. Berry's nimble, flinty band that day included Chess Records' in-house sage Willie Dixon on upright bass and a crucial St Louis sidekick: pianist Johnnie Johnson, previously Berry's boss in the St John's Trio and an undersung pillar in Berry's recording and performing life un-

til Johnson's death in 2005. In fact, as Berry noted in his book, "Several of those completions, in my opinion, were perfect" – a telling aside from a man who, in time, was running his own affairs with iron will and a sharp eye on every dollar in play.

Berry actually cut *Maybellene* and its slow-blues flip, *Wee Wee Hours*, before signing with Chess. That night, after the session, Berry went to Leonard's office and sat down with the double-talk paperwork, reading it "word for word... knowing full well I'd sign the damn thing anyway."

But the guitarist had something more pressing on his mind. As he, Johnson and drummer Ebby Hardy drove back to St Louis "through the black night," Berry recalled, "more songs were sprouting in my head. As easy as it seemed now that the session was over, another four were bound to come forth." That was an understatement. *Maybellene* was the explosive entrance of a self-assured, comprehensive genius in songwriting, lyric craftsmanship and jet-age electric-guitar vocabulary. Chuck Berry was rock'n'roll's first auteur-star. And he was just getting started.

IN MAY 1957, CHESSE RELEASED BERRY'S first LP. The label called it *After School Session*, a cash-in on their star's latest hit. *School Day* (Ring! Ring! Goes The Bell) – an even bigger record than *Maybellene*, going to Number 3 on the pop chart – was supercharged comic observation: a dissection of classroom ennui with the crisp, tumble-forward syntax of 1965 Bob Dylan, a decade ahead of schedule, and fast, sly allusions to black underclass life ("Soon as three o'clock rolls around/ You finally lay your burden down").



The song was, along with that album title, fiction on multiple counts. When Berry signed to Chess, he was on the far side of adolescence – 28, married and a father. He was also a high-school dropout with a criminal record. Berry was finishing a three-year stint in reform school for car theft and armed robbery when R&B singer Roy Brown cut his 1947 single 'Good Rockin' Tonight', a brawny prophecy of urban swing and black-church hosanna. And Berry had only recently started playing electric guitar with serious intent – under the spell of Charlie Christian and T-Bone Walker – when Jackie Brenston laid down his 1951 solid sender 'Rocket 88' for Sam Phillips at his Sun studio in Memphis, with guitarist Willie Kizart's accidental game-changing distortion.

Maybellene was not Berry's first record. In August 1954, he played nondescript guitar as a sideman on 'Oh Maria', a faux-calypto single by the St Louis singer Joe Alexander on the tiny Ballad label. By comparison, a few weeks earlier, Elvis Presley impulsively turned to the Arthur Crudup blues 'That's Alright Mama' during a stalled session for Phillips at Sun, unleashing rock'n'roll's first truly original voice. But Presley – who covered Maybellene in the summer of '55, on the Louisiana Hayride radio show – would not become a phenomenon for nearly two years, until his 1956 RCA debut, 'Heartbreak Hotel'.

By that spring, Berry had followed his breakthrough with another half-dozen torpedoes of whip-crack wordplay and immortal riffing, including another drag-race classic 'You Can't Catch Me'; the outright sexual bragging and racial innuendo of 'Brown Eyed Handsome Man'; and the Top 30 single 'Roll Over Beethoven', Berry's definitive announcement that there was a new generation of long-hairs in town. The guitarist came late to his greatness and destiny but stayed quick and consistent in his innovation through the last half of the '50s.

"The commercial value in songs is a great instigator," Berry said bluntly in explanation of his '50s work rate in one of his best interviews – actually a lunchtime question-and-answer exchange with college students before a May 1969 show in Berkeley, California. "A song, to me, could come from a group [of notes]," Berry went on, according to Greil Marcus's report in *Rolling Stone*. "The riff might say words to me... I might incorporate that riff into a pattern and go from there musically." The important thing, the guitarist said, was "to keep my music simple, so that I could preach it in two or three minutes. A lot of the songs are alike," he confessed. The invention and enduring resonance, he might have added, were in the details.

Like, for instance, Berry's hands. "They are big, with long nails and thick fingers," writer Neil Strauss observed when the guitarist gave one of his last real interviews to *Rolling Stone* in 2010. "They seem built not for subtle picking but for the loud, overdriven, spilling-over-the-edges riffs that made Berry's music seem so much younger, wilder and more dangerous than the rhythm and blues of his predecessors."

Addressing those Berkeley students in 1969, Berry freely admitted the formula in his guitar playing, citing a St Louis hero, Carl Hogan, who

BERRY And The Brits

The Beat Boom was unimaginable without Chuck Berry.
Ask **Keith Richards**
— **Pat Gilbert** did.

IN THE late '50s Chuck Berry was a million-selling R&B star, but it's unlikely that the music world would revere him quite so vociferously today if it wasn't for the devotional awe of The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. When those two acts committed their first Berry songs to tape in summer 1963 – the Fabs with 'Roll Over Beethoven' for *With The Beatles* and the Stones with 'Come On', their debut 7-inch – Chuck was a disgraced has-been, serving a 20-month prison sentence for transporting a 14-year-old Apache girl across state lines. Yet within six months of his release in October '63, white teenagers across America were gyrating to Brit Invasion covers of his peerless old compositions.

For Keith Richards, who famously formed the soon-to-be Stones with Mick Jagger after bonding over an imported Berry LP, the guitarist's records possessed a magical perfection. "Chuck's an amazing piece of work," he told *MOJO* in 2015. "Some of those lyrics, the ease of delivery, that's the coolest thing in the world to me. I think he had an amazing way of synthesising what was going on and bringing it down to the bare essentials. There's very little

"Some of those lyrics, the ease of delivery, that's the coolest thing in the world." Keith Richards

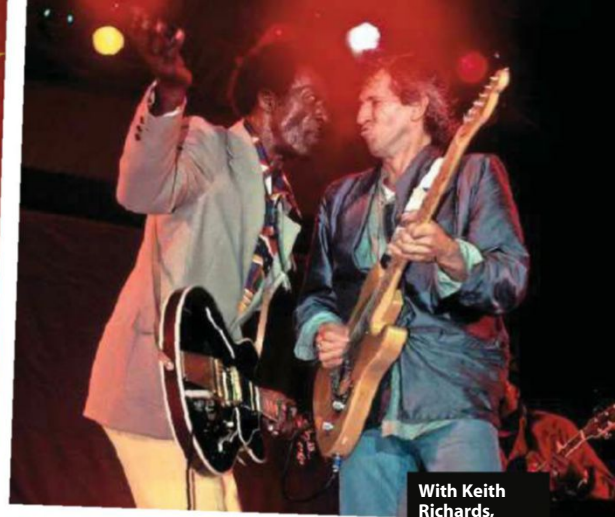
going on in Chuck Berry's records, but what is going on is in the right place and the right times."

Although the Brit Invasion restored his credibility and bank balance (if not his own hit-making potential), the fiercely proud Berry wasn't always appreciative of his apostles' respect. His first meeting – a two-song jam with John Lennon on the Mike Douglas Show in February 1972 – was a veritable love-in, but not so his encounters with Richards, whom Berry booted off the stage in LA in '72, punched in the face in New York in '81, and rowed with while filming 1987's Chuck-fêting concert film, *Hail! Hail! Rock'n'Roll*.

"I think you'll find Chuck is Number 1 for being cantankerous," chuckled Richards. "He's also a big mood-switcher. When we were rehearsing that movie it was almost like he was trying to fuck it up. There's a lot of stuff inside that he's always kept locked up. But I love the fucker."

The Beatles' and Stones' touching official tributes to Berry acknowledged that his influence on rock music was immeasurable. "To us he was a magician making music that was exotic yet normal at the same time," said Paul McCartney. "We learnt so many things from him which led us into a dream world of rock'n'roll music."

For Keith Richards, it was simpler. "One of my big lights has gone out," he tweeted.



With Keith Richards, Chicago Blues Festival, June 7, 1986.

played with Louis Jordan's Tympany Five. "Much of my material

begins with [his] familiar riffs, like 'ba doo doo dah, ba doo doo dah.'" Berry's departure was in the physical attack and pictorial echo of his hooks: the mocking dance of the guitar running through 'You Can't Catch Me'; the erotic skid, like a stripper's shimmy, amplifying the precocious seduction in 'Sweet Little Sixteen'; the cascading freedom ring of the bell in 'School Day'.

That taut, propulsive integration of lick and rhythm bloomed abroad in Keith Richards and

Pete Townshend. But Berry could be a dextrous, elegant player. His soloing in

a breakneck 1957 take of 'How High

The Moon', left by Chess in the can until 1963, is fleet and spearing.

And you can clearly hear a long-distance homage to Deep Feeling, Berry's unique '57 outing on Hawaiian-flavoured steel guitar, in Peter

Green's 1968 instrumental beauty for

Fleetwood Mac, 'Albatross'.

BERRY WAS HARDLY TEENAGE-idol material. He was tall, lean and forbidding even when he smiled, as if being photographed at gunpoint. His showmanship betrayed his years. The duckwalk – a crowd-pleasing signature that he dated to a 1956 Alan Freed revue where he tried to hide the wrinkles in his suit – was part-Groucho Marx stride, part T-Bone Walker riding a unicycle. His writing, for all the late-model car and jet-plane references, invoked more austere circumstances, like the message scrawled on the wall next to the phone in Memphis, Tennessee.

But Berry was an astute editor too. In a December 1956 demo of 'Rock & Roll Music', he sings, "If you want to rock with me", in the final chorus. By the 1957 single, that became, "If you want to dance with me" – a better vocal flow with enhanced come-hither effect.

Berry had been crossing over – between eras, genres and social barriers – from the start, in St Louis clubs where he played Hank Williams and Bob Wills songs for black crowds and emulated Nat King Cole's clarity in his own diction, even at the high speeds of 'Too Much Monkey Business' and 'Reelin' And Rockin''. Unlike Diddley, Domino, Little Richard and even Presley, who all grew up poor and Southern, Berry came from both struggle and advantage – a black middle-class ➤



Promised Land Sounds

Before Chuck Berry's death, he'd lined up an all-new album release, full of classic riffs and ribaldry. **Chris Nelson** tells the inside story.

WHEN CHUCK Berry announced last October, on his 90th birthday, that he would issue new music in 2017, the music world was staggered. He had called a halt to his run of monthly gigs at St Louis' Blueberry Hill club two years before. It wasn't known that he was recording, and there were no rumours of a release.

In fact, he had set the stage for a new album after one of those last Blueberry Hill shows, in a conversation with the club's owner Joe Edwards. "My mom was there," recalls Chuck's son, Charles Berry Jr. "She remembers Dad talking to Joe, saying, 'I'm ready. Let's get this thing done.'"

That thing became *Chuck*, the now-posthumous 10-song album due in June. It's Berry's first album of new music since *Rockit* in 1979. And although he'd written and recorded songs since, many had perished when the studio on his farm outside St Louis burned down in 1989. It was rebuilt two years later, and Berry cut the basic guitar and vocal tracks for *Chuck* there at various times between 1991 and 2014, Charles Jr says.

The eight originals on *Chuck* recall timeless, rocking Berry. There's vintage wordplay in Wonderful Woman – "Woe be unto me, if it be, that she, gets away" – which also includes a subtle nod to his most famous inheritors, The Rolling Stones: "You know I need satisfaction/I didn't get any yesterday." Meanwhile, Jamaica Moon is a Caribbean-flavoured cut that updates Berry's classic 1956 release, Havana Moon.

The set also includes two covers: a bluesy version of Haven Gillespie and J. Fred Coots' 1938 standard You Go To My Head, and Tony Joe White's 3/4 Time. White's salute to cars, guitars and women was recorded by Ray Charles on his 1983 country LP *Wish You Were Here Tonight*. Berry's version, recorded live on-stage, acknowledges mortality – "I like what I'm doin' and I hope it don't end too soon" – but ends with an ad lib that mixes his penchants for the salacious and contemporary: "I been hoping to find a woman like you honey, whose software matches this hard drive of mine."

WITH HIS own vocals and guitar tracks already cut, Berry instructed his Blueberry Hill live band to complete the tracks. Charles Jr plays guitar, as does his son, Charles Berry III. Berry's daughter and longtime collaborator, Ingrid, duets on Darlin', which Chuck wrote for her. While there are a few assists – Gary Clark Jr and Rage Against The Machine's Tom Morello each play on a song – it's not weighed

down by the kind of heavyweight guest appearances common to albums by rock's elder statesmen.

"He was like, 'You know what? We're gonna play it like Chuck Berry plays it,'" Charles Jr says. "I've got who I want to be on this record right here in St Louis. I'm gonna finish this thing off with my band."

Given the chance to release the set, Nashville indie label Dualtone jumped at it. It was the label's loving treatment of June Carter Cash's last records that impressed the Berry family, says Dualtone's Paul Roper. "There wasn't a need for us to hear any [music in advance]," he says. "We knew this was going to be a part of rock history." Yet it was Dualtone who broached the idea of adding guests. The family was initially reluctant, says Charles Jr. "Then they brought Gary Clark Jr's name up, and it was like, 'Oh hell yeah, go get him.'"

We immediately zeroed in on him."

Berry Sr first took note of Clark in 2006, when the upstart opened for the legend in Austin, Texas. Berry noticed Clark played a Gibson ES series guitar, the same line he himself had long

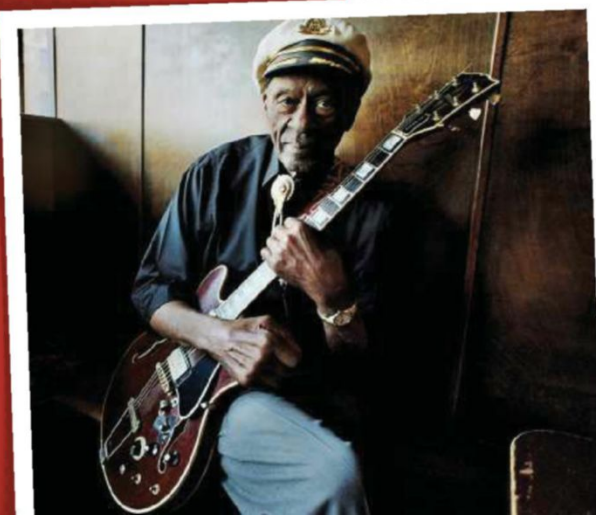
favoured. "After the show, we strike a conversation up with Gary," recalls Charles Jr. "My dad's thinking, 'He's got it. He's good.' And we remember that kind of stuff."

The label also brought in Morello, whose solo on Big Boys is a salute to rock's first guitar hero. "To play on a record with the man who invented those riffs, crafted that tone, wrote those songs and walked that duck walk is one of the greatest honours of my career," Morello says.

Berry's intentions with *Chuck* were pragmatic, says Charles Jr. "Did he relate to me that this was going to be his last record? No. [It was just] 'I wanna get a record out.'"

Fans now wonder if a Prince-like vault of unreleased recordings lies in wait. "I'm gonna have to hold my cards close to my chest on that one," Berry Jr smiles. "No official answer is a great way of putting it."

"He was like, 'You know what? We're gonna play it like Chuck Berry plays it.'"
Charles Berry Jr





"BERRY WAS HARDLY TEEN-IDOL MATERIAL. HE WAS TALL, LEAN & FORBIDDING EVEN WHEN HE SMILED."

◀ family in the Midwest – and aspired to economic independence before Maybellene, training as a beautician, doing well enough to buy his own home.

Trading up to something bigger and better – in wheels, comfort, pleasure – was a core theme in Berry's best songs. Recorded a couple of months after his Maybellene windfall, No Money Down – written over the rhythm and chord structure of Diddley's '55 B-side I'm A Man – was pure negotiation, Berry turning in that "broken down, raggedy Ford" (presumably after losing the Maybellene race) for a Coupe de Ville so hot "I'm burnin' aviation fuel." Berry experienced American racism at its most blatant: a 1959 arrest on a Mann Act charge, an openly prejudicial judge, two trials and 20 months in federal prison. Yet on the verge of that furore, during a dispiriting tour of Australia, Berry wrote Back In The U.S.A., a national anthem of pure joy for a place "where hamburgers sizzle on an open grill night and day." And in Promised Land, written in jail near the end of his term, Berry imagined a 1st Class escape (silk suit, T-bone steak) and likened a cross-country jet to religious salvation: "Swing low, sweet chariot, come down easy/Taxi to the terminal zone."

BERRY DIDN'T BEGIN WRITING ABOUT TEENAGERS until they started buying his records (that commercial "instigator" again). But he responded to their enthusiasm and frustrations – with routine and puritanism in school, work and especially sex – with an empathy and snappy patter that seemed to come straight from the malt shop (the reference to American Bandstand in Sweet Little Sixteen plugged one of his teen audience's favourite TV shows, and cleverly ensured that Bandstand's Dick Clark supported the song). But Berry also illuminated darker corners in contemporary black life. The police raid that breaks up the party in 1958's Around And Around ("Both doors blew back") could have happened on either side of the tracks.

Berry never fully recovered commercially from his first stay in prison, although he had two of his biggest singles in the spring of '64, as soon as he hit fresh air: Nadine (Is It You?) and another car song, No Particular Place To Go, about the beauty of having no fixed stop ahead. But Berry's bitterness and suspicion were set as he left Chess in 1966 for bigger money at Mercury, returned after a few pallid albums and established a touring routine that lasted the rest of his life: pick-up bands, the bread upfront, hit-and-miss gigs depending on his mood. With the fluke exception and embarrassment of his only Number 1 single – My Ding-A-Ling topping the charts in the US and UK in 1972 – Berry became trapped in his own fiercely guarded twilight: a compelling, if ornery and complicated, legend who retreated entirely from the studio after 1979's *Rockit*; alternating between greatest-hits shows and defensive seclusion at his nightclub-compound, Berry Park, in Wentzville, Missouri, where he completed *Chuck*, his first album in 38 years, just before his death [see panel, left].

It will forever be a matter of dispute: what was the first rock'n'roll record? This is certain: after establishing the art of rock'n'roll songwriting and rock guitar's foundation sound on Maybellene, Berry created the first and best original songs about the immediate charge and lasting, transformative power of the music itself – Roll Over Beethoven, Rock & Roll Music, the plainly autobiographical Johnny B. Goode. During that 1969 Q&A in Berkeley, Berry was asked to describe what rock'n'roll "has done to the kids in America".

"It brings you together," he said, "because if two people like the same music, they can be standing beside each other shaking and they wind up dancing, and that's a matter of communication... Without words, they'll join hands... And sometimes some of the dancers, they don't even look. You don't even touch your partner, you just *dance*."

Berry got there in 1955, just as the party went into full swing. He made sure that it never stopped.

**Chuck in the '70s in Holland:
"pick-up bands, bread
upfront, hit-and-miss gigs
depending on his mood";
(inset) photographed in
Missouri, November 10, 2011.**

Camera Press, Danny Clinch



I'M ONLY HERE FOR THIS MOMENT



*"KISS ME, PLEASE KISS ME
BUT KISS ME OUT OF DESIRE, BABE, NOT CONSOLATION
OH, YOU KNOW IT MAKES ME SO ANGRY
'COS I KNOW THAT IN TIME, I'LL ONLY MAKE YOU CRY
THIS IS OUR LAST GOODBYE"*

ON MAY 29, IT WILL BE 20 YEARS
SINCE **JEFF BUCKLEY** WADED INTO
THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND MUSIC
LOST A SHOOTING STAR OF
EXTRAORDINARY VISION AND EMOTIONAL
INTENSITY. VIA POIGNANT NEW
INTERVIEWS WITH THE SINGER'S FRIENDS
AND BANDMATES, **CHARLIE MOSS**
DISCOVERS HOW BUCKLEY'S RELOCATION
TO MEMPHIS PROMISED RENEWAL,
BUT ENDED IN DISASTER.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MERRI CYR**



Eternal life: Jeff Buckley on a break between sets recording the Live At Sin-é EP, July 1993.



JEFF BUCKLEY KNEW HE WAS GOING TO DIE YOUNG. IT WAS just a matter of how and when.

His autopsy report shows no sign of drugs in his system and he had had the equivalent of one beer the night before his drowning in Memphis' Wolf River Harbor on May 29, 1997. His death was ruled an accident. The day he died, was, in fact, one of the happiest days of his life.

Before moving to Memphis, Buckley and his band had been touring for two years promoting his debut album *Grace*. At the beginning of the tour, most casual observers knew of him only in connection with his famous father — enraptured folk-rock singer Tim Buckley — who had died of a heroin overdose at the age of 28 in 1975. The younger Buckley had only met his father once, spending a week with him when he was eight.

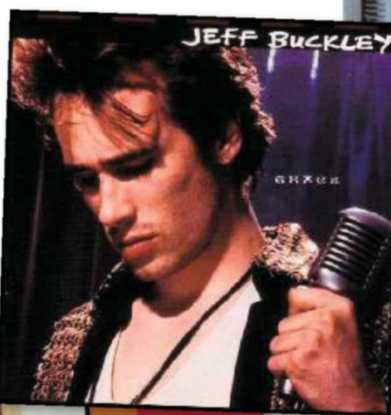
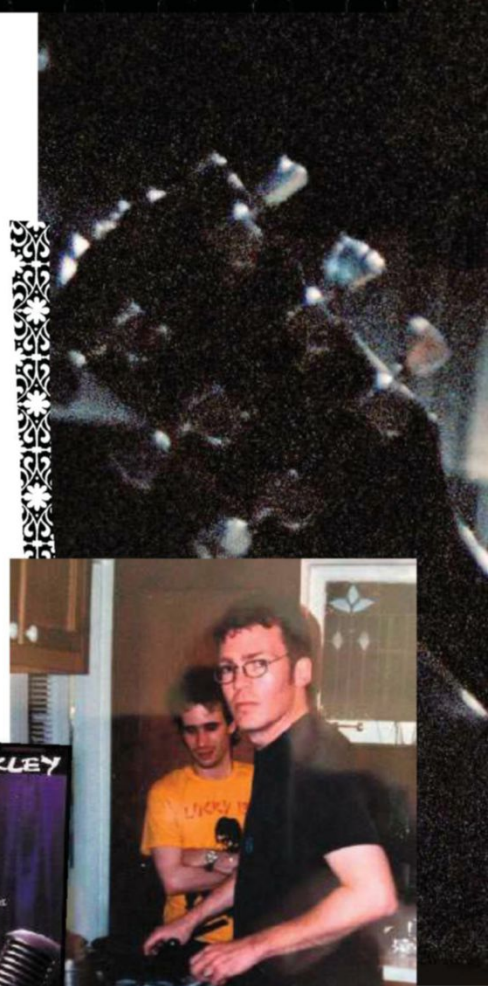
By the time his tour was finished, Buckley was a full-on star and his label, Columbia, wanted another album that sounded like *Grace*. But Buckley was already on a different path. "He definitely wanted to make a much grittier album than *Grace*," says guitarist Michael Tighe, who joined Buckley's band after the bulk of *Grace* had been recorded. "He often would say that he wanted to make music that would scare people. And he was into the idea of dividing his audience. He knew that a lot of his audience wouldn't like this album and he was energised and excited by that."

Buckley and his band — with Parker Kindred replacing *Grace* drummer Matt Johnson — had been writing and recording new material in New York City with Tom Verlaine. But Buckley felt under the microscope in New York. Meanwhile, aspects of the group's lifestyle, which had come to the fore on the *Grace* tour, were dissipating their focus. Buckley needed to escape, and the destination he chose was Memphis, home of his friend Dave Shouse, lead singer of alt-rock band The Grifters. "Everything came from his relationship with The Grifters," says Gene Bowen, Buckley's former tour manager, "and The Grifters were attached to Easley McCain Studios, and Doug Easley. So that was the attraction... There's a real deep musical friendship with them."

BUCKLEY HAD FIRST MET SHOUSE WHILE performing a show at Gabe's Oasis in Iowa City in 1994. The Grifters were on tour with another band, The Dambuilders, which featured violinist Joan Wasser, who would eventually become Buckley's girlfriend. Shouse remembers being told that neither band would be headlining that show, and that they would both be supporting Buckley. "We were like, 'Who?'," laughs Shouse. "And, of course that night, we saw him play and we were just like, 'Oh my God, this guy is different.'"

Once Buckley got to Memphis, he and his band resumed recording with Verlaine at Easley McCain. Memphis, for Buckley, was meant to be a temporary refuge — two weeks while he found the direction for the new album. But the singer felt so at home he called Bowen and told him he was staying longer. He rented a small house on 91 N. Rembert St. Unknown locally, he would ride his bicycle to record stores, like nearby Shangri-la Records or Audiomania, chatting with employees about Bob Dylan and other favourite musicians. He ordered takeout from Saigon Le — a nearby Vietnamese restaurant — so often that he was mistaken for a delivery boy. "Things were somewhat deconstructed," recalls Shouse. "There wasn't a label. There weren't people running his life. He could be in his house. He could move into the attic if he wanted."

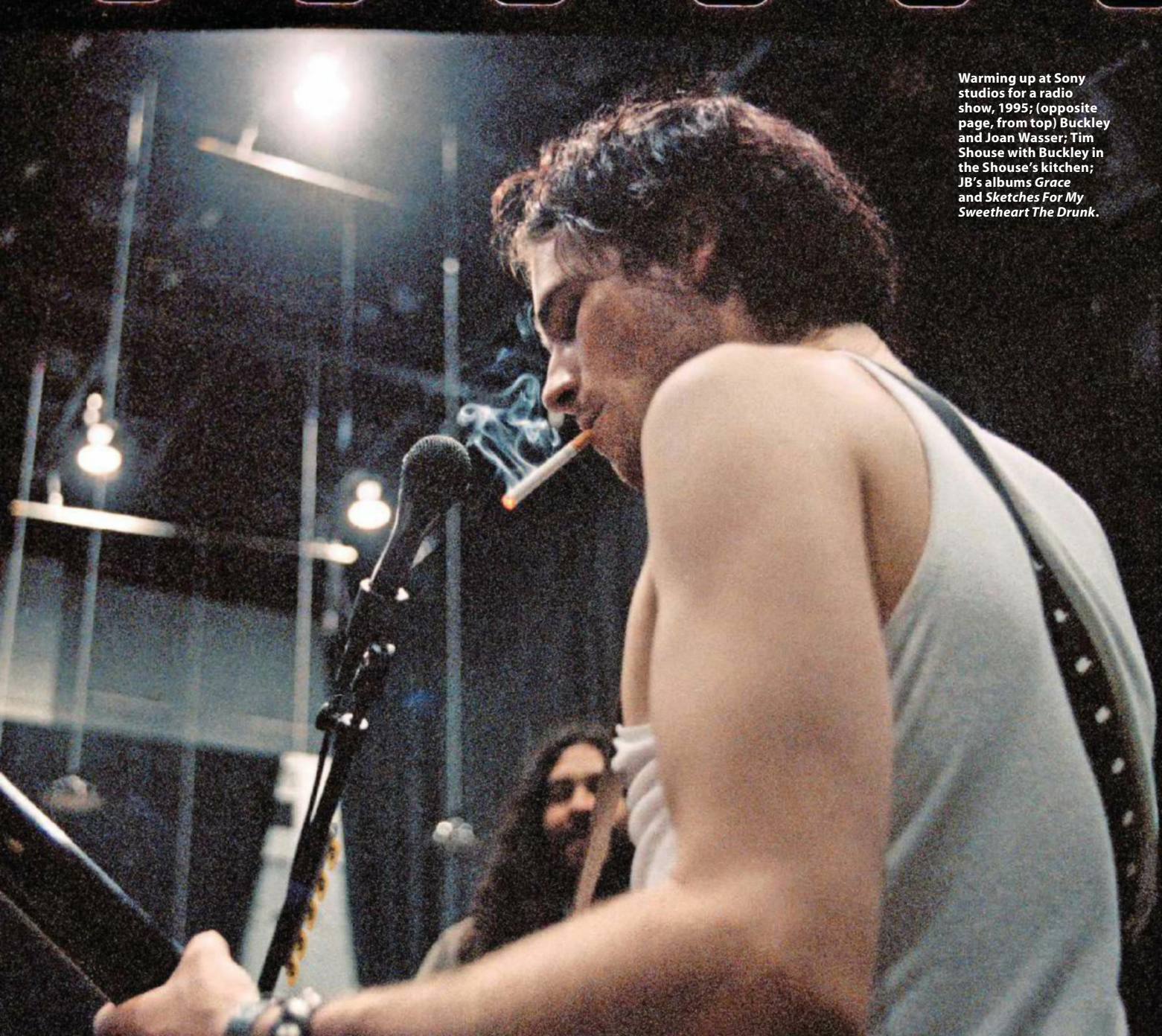
Wasser, who had been dating Buckley for three years by then, would make bi-weekly trips to Memphis to see him. "I know he had been



asking the universe for help with all of this," she says. "We spent time in the attic, which felt like a kind of place of worship or meditation. He found a dead bird there and had strong feelings about seeing anything that had expired. Everything took on a lot of meaning at this time, when he was going through so much mental turmoil."

Buckley had conflicting feelings about his father, and his mother Mary Guibert — described as controlling by many of his old friends. Plus, the longer he stayed in Memphis, the more word spread that he was the guy who made *Grace*. "It was a point where he was a little bit unsteady, and a lot more vulnerable," says Shouse. "So we tried to help him. We took him breakfast, or, were like, Stay over... sleep on the couch. I think that's what he wanted... He felt like he could disappear."

"I felt very maternal," says Shouse's wife Tammy. "Jeff definitely looked up to David. He would say, 'I don't know why that guy even



Warming up at Sony studios for a radio show, 1995; (opposite page, from top) Buckley and Joan Wasser; Tim Shouse with Buckley in the Shouse's kitchen; JB's albums *Grace* and *Sketches For My Sweetheart The Drunk*.

“NOT TOO LONG AFTER WE MET, HE SAID, ‘YOU KNOW, I’M GOING TO DIE YOUNG’.”

JOAN WASSER

talks to me.’ Of course, David would say the same thing,” she adds with a laugh. “I think that was part of what he struggled with, he still felt like a boy. In some ways, he was very mature and developed, and in other ways, he was nothing near.”

Embryonic superstardom didn’t help. “I saw him deal with fans at shows; girls were beside themselves, the kind of thing I would have died for,” says The Grifters’ Tripp Lamkins. “I saw him talk a girl down before. He was like, ‘You’re going to have to realise I’m just a guy...’ and the girl said, ‘Oh, you’re Jeff Buckley.’ And he said, ‘I’m not what you think I am. I’m just a person.’”

Meanwhile, his father’s legacy loomed large. “Jeff was either furious or he really loved what he did, and who he was,” says Wasser. “He would often buy Tim’s whole catalogue of CDs and listen to them for a while, and then throw them in the garbage.”

BUCKLEY SPENT A LOT OF TIME IN THE ATTIC, working on songs, and he began to sense the album finally coming together. He had already fired Verlaine. Now

he began talking to Bowen about staying in Memphis permanently, about buying the N. Rembert St house, getting his licence and buying a car. He wanted to become a Memphian.

Tammy remembers taking Buckley to the Memphis Zoo, one of his favourite places – this time to get a job. “He felt that the guy working the butterfly house was mistreating the butterflies... not doing a good job,” she says. “So he wanted to apply for a job working at the butterfly house. Jeff took a shower and got all spruced up. He put on his clothes with those little patches on the shoulders and the vintage suit thing and he was all shiny and went in to put in his application.

“He wanted a normal guy life,” she continues. “I know we had a couple conversations about him feeling difficulty in how to be a man, feeling he’s got somebody controlling his funds, he’s got somebody controlling what he does, and where he goes, and what he does... and he did not know how to take control.”

Buckley had a regular gig Monday nights at a local bar, Barrister’s, where he tried out new material, giving him a new perspective on the songs. At home, at Wasser’s urging, he put headphones aside and ➤

DREAM BROTHER

GRACE DRUMMER

MATT JOHNSON STUCK WITH
JEFF BUCKLEY UNTIL
TOURING – AND HARD DRUGS
– DROVE THEM APART.
AS TOLD TO JIM IRVIN.



Happy daze: Jeff with his band in a stationery store, Austin, Texas, November 1994; (below) you were fab – meeting Paul and Linda McCartney, backstage at Roseland, NYC, spring 1995.



I MOVED TO New York from Texas when I was 18 to go to music school. I was 22 when I heard about Jeff. A guy called John Moran, who wrote The Manson Family Opera and was connected with Philip Glass, was a friend of Rebecca Moore, Jeff's girlfriend at the time, and I met them on the street. I knew John because I was interning at Philip Glass's studio on Broadway. He introduced me as a drummer and Rebecca said, "My buddy Jeff is looking for a drummer." I scrawled my number on a napkin and within a day Jeff's raspy voice was on my answering machine. "I have a record deal. I need to move fast and I'm holding auditions." We set something up within a couple of days and he seemed committed straight away.

He came off as intense. I didn't know what to make of him, he was a different kind of musical animal. He was reticent in the beginning about getting on the microphone. Rehearsals started with free-associating, like he was coaching Mick [Grondahl, bass] and me as a rhythm section. It was some weeks before I heard him singing the songs and that was a

surprise! To this day, I don't know of any singers who use so much of the potential of the human voice as Jeff did, from serrated screaming to ribbon-like, serene passages of melody, to almost talking, he just used so much of the voice to communicate, to elicit an emotional catharsis from himself and the people who were present.

Recording *Grace* at Bearsville in Woodstock had to do with the lack of distractions, being out of the city, a feeling of splendid isolation in this bucolic little town: the light, the trees just coming into fall, it was an extraordinarily beautiful place. We'd do our session each day and at night we'd hang out watching Beavis And Butt-head, playing pool, listening to music in the little bedroom shacks. We did one set of basic tracks per day. The songs played themselves, everybody was confident.

Jeff was a pattern interrupt, somebody who broke the mould. If he had a mission it seemed to do with having an emotional experience in a musical situation. He understood what music can catalyse. He was intoxicated with that.

Michael Tighe [guitar] came on after most of *Grace* had been done. He gave Jeff more

freedom as a guitar player and they wrote *So Real* together. When Jeff heard the record with *So Real* on it, he saw an album that not only had a family of songs that captured a moment but also expressed where he was going. He thought that song saved the record.

Jeff tried to step back from some of the more feminine qualities in evidence on *Grace*, it felt like there was pressure on him to toughen up. The music culture at that time definitely affected us. We came along just after Kurt Cobain's death. I don't recall Jeff talking about that, or about his father's death, but I think he was keenly aware of the statistics for life expectancy of somebody in his position, that he occupied a dangerous role. There was a moth-to-a-flame aspect to him. He had a self-destructive strain. Smoking, for example. He knew how bad it was for him and what it did to him psychologically. He'd had some sober insights into drugs after a bad period when he was younger, but he embraced them again when we started touring. That was a very bad sign.

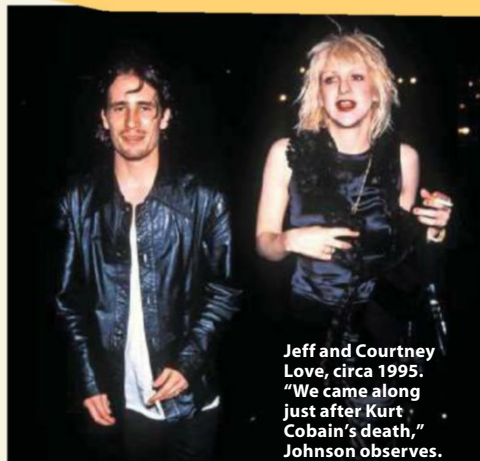
He had a tendency towards depression and deep introspection; somewhere in there was real trauma. Growing up without a father, who then became a tragic figure, that's a tough spot to be in, might predispose someone to self-destructive

or careless behaviours. When he died he went swimming fully dressed, that's just stupid. There was also an element of pretentiousness about it; he was always a performer. That doesn't mean an insufferable douchebag who wanted to be the centre of attention all the time, that wasn't Jeff, but he needed to not be normal and be memorable, perhaps because something inside him felt malnourished by the way he was raised.

I found him difficult to talk to. He intimidated me. I felt he was way more talented and knowledgeable than I was. He was like an older brother, a mentor. Mickey and Michael had a better rapport with him verbally. But one of the things Jeff and I shared was a high degree of empathy for other people. He was a very empathetic person who had a lot of insecurities.

After a while, things got weird on the road. I'd

"TO THIS DAY, I DON'T KNOW OF ANY SINGERS WHO USE SO MUCH OF THE POTENTIAL OF THE HUMAN VOICE."



Jeff and Courtney Love, circa 1995. "We came along just after Kurt Cobain's death," Johnson observes.

never been around people on hard drugs on tour. It was like lead poisoning, like someone was poisoning the psychic environment with evil. People become internalised, dissociated. Drugs make people all about getting off and escaping, becoming removed.

Jeff was gullible, impressed by it, he let it happen and joined in. I remember a flight to Australia. We'd just got on the plane, for this long flight, and I smelt vomit. Jeff had thrown up all over the back of the seat, and that was a deciding moment for me. It's not even about professionalism; it's about common human decency. He was



doing as much as he could of whatever he felt too scared to take over international borders. However much he felt he could take that wouldn't kill him, he just took it.

If I were in that band now, I'd look each one of them in the eye and say, 'I love you, but you're an idiot,' tell them straight what I think and carry on playing. Back then I was too young and too insecure. What was I afraid of? Afraid of losing that gig. How did I head into the fear? I quit. Boom, the most primal thing I could do. The best way I could deal with my fear of failure and the fact that I couldn't deal with what these people were doing with their success. I didn't want to be around them any more. Jeff was surprised but he didn't try to stop me.

Being with Jeff made me. The experience was like basic training and then activity in a theatre of war. I had to confront my deficiencies on a daily basis and that was extremely painful, but Jeff showed me how to get better, he showed me what is worth getting better for.

The way that Jeff employed music, the emotional payout was so high. My respect for him is of the highest order. I love him and I carry him and my memories of him with me at all times; he's family, part of my psyche.

◀ bought a pair of second-hand speakers. The sound of his 4-track demos filled the house. "It was one of the most beautiful moments I've experienced," she says. "The music he was making was astounding. It was so beautiful, so raw, pure emotion. Then to experience him hear it in the room the first time... I saw in his eyes, 'My God, this is something. This is real, it's not just this dream sound in my headphones.'"

In April, Buckley and his managers told Bowen to start preparing for rehearsals. Recording would start in late May. Then, on May 28, Buckley invited Bowen to his house to hear 4-track recordings of a handful of songs that would later comprise side two of *Sketches For My Sweetheart The Drunk*. "He was like, 'The music is black and white and the band will bring the colours.' That's all. I got it. I understood."

Around the same time, Buckley called Michael Tighe. "He actually left me a message two days before we went down there and he said he was really excited about the material he was working on: 'It's feeling like it did when we first got together and played music as a band.'"

On May 29, Tighe and the rest of the band were due to arrive. Bowen – who had arrived in a Ryder truck filled with the band's gear a few days earlier – had gone to pick them up at the airport. The plan was for Buckley and Bowen's friend, Keith Foti, to meet the band back at N. Rembert St around 10 pm. Until then, Buckley and Foti were going to the rehearsal space on Young Street. On the way there (some say that Buckley had somehow forgotten the way) they took a detour. And that's when Buckley took his fatal swim. "Jeff couldn't swim," Wasser remembers. "I know, because I tried to teach him many times; I grew up in the water. I helped him get to a place where he could do backstroke pretty well, and that's apparently what he was doing that day in the water. Also people have said, 'Oh, his boots dragged him down. He always wore steel-toed boots.' But actually, he had, with me, bought cheap black boots from K-mart that weighed almost nothing; and that's what he was wearing."

Foti recalled the pair of them listening to The Beatles and Jane's Addiction on Foti's boombox before they drew up at the Harbor shore. Buckley even set the boombox down on the riverbank before wading in. Buckley sang Led Zeppelin's Whole Lotta Love as Foti yelled at him to avoid two boats that bore down on his bobbing head. He turned to move the boombox to avoid the backwash. When he turned back, Buckley was gone.

JOAN WASSER REMEMBERS THAT BUCKLEY always talked about dying. "Not too long after we met, he said, 'You know, I'm going to die young. I have to let you know. You may not want to be with me because of this.'" She told him that she would be with him no matter what and that she didn't see him dying young but, rather, she could see him as an older man. Buckley told Wasser he hoped she was right. For Buckley's Memphis circle, there are feelings of guilt as well as sadness.

"I feel like Memphis walked him down the aisle," says Tammy Shouse. "Because, he was dreaming about his death and he knew that something was up, and he felt it... I felt a lot of responsibility because Joan said to me, 'Take care of him. Keep his feet on the ground.'"

"It was a strange time for us all," says Dave Shouse. "Jeff dying was... there was so much left untapped, unsaid, unspoken... not just what he was doing musically, but the relationships with all these people in Memphis. Memphis provided what Memphis provides for a lot of people, which was the ability to slow everything in your life down... He was ready when the band showed up. He was ready to begin the next step."

"The joyful freedom I saw him feeling when he was in Memphis was profound," says Wasser. "It seemed to me that this freedom allowed him to dive into parts of his life he'd been wanting to but hadn't been able to while in New York City. I feel that ultimately, he did what he needed to do for himself to set himself free from the shackles he had been feeling about the past... and if he could, indeed, feel that his time was coming to an end, he did a great job of it. It's been 20 years and I am still dumbfounded by the beauty of his soul."

On a particularly sunny day during one of her visits to Memphis, Buckley took Wasser to see an abandoned, antique, baby blue car, surrounded by overgrown plants. Full of rust and falling apart, they sat on the hood and Buckley asked her to marry him. Shocked, she took a minute to catch her breath and then told him yes. They planned on marrying as soon as Buckley and the band were done recording.



MOJO's Jeff Buckley feature uses photographs from 25 Years Of Grace: An Anniversary Tribute To Jeff Buckley's Classic Album by Merri Cyr with Jeff Apter.

Out in from September 2019, it can be pre-ordered from backwingstore.com/grace at a 25% discount.

“SHIT, GENE, IS THIS REAL? AM I HAVING A BAD DREAM?”

THE DAYS BETWEEN JEFF BUCKLEY'S DISAPPEARANCE AND THE DISCOVERY OF HIS BODY WERE A SURREAL HELL FOR EVERYONE CONNECTED WITH THE SINGER. NO ONE WAS MORE DEVASTATED THAN THE MAN WHO HAD TO PICK UP THE PIECES: JEFF'S CO-MANAGER **DAVE LORY**.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MERRI CYR**

DAVE LORY BEGAN CO-MANAGING Jeff Buckley in December 1993, just prior to the release of debut EP *Live At Sin-é*. Initial manager George Stein was a lawyer and Sony requested he share duties with someone who'd managed artists previously. Lory had worked with The Allman Brothers Band, Ronnie Spector and others and had just finished producing New York's indie music festival, the New Music Seminar, when he joined the team.

By 1997, the sprawling world tour for *Grace*, which lasted over two years, had finally wound down and Buckley was in Memphis working on the second album. Rehearsals were booked to start on the night of May 29, 1997 when the band flew into Memphis. Meanwhile, Lory had taken on a new artist, at Buckley's suggestion — Dublin-based Welsh singer-songwriter, Katell Keineg — and was in Dublin setting up *Jet*, her second album for Elektra, due to launch the following day.

This is an abridged version of his account of what happened next.

MAY 30, 1997

A PHONE IS RINGING. IT ISN'T MINE. Hotel phone. But I didn't order a wake-up

call. So someone is calling me in the middle of the night. Shit, somebody's fucked up. Where am I? Dublin. Has something happened at home? It's still ringing. I'd better answer the fucking thing. What time is it? 5.58am. I've only been asleep four hours. This had better be good.

“Uh huh.”

“Dave?”

Buckley meets and greets fans at an in-store, Dallas, Texas, 1994; (right) in Tompkins Square Park, NYC, July 1993.



It's Jack Bookbinder, my assistant... Someone's in jail or hospital. Great.

“Dave, Gene has called me. He says it's urgent. He needs to talk to you. I'm gonna put the phone up to my cell. OK, Gene, I've got Dave.”

I can just about hear Gene Bowen, Jeff's tour manager. He's agitated, shouting so that I can hear him from 5,000 miles away. There's a weird noise in the background that I can't make out, like motors running.

“Dave! Jeff's gone missing.”

“What do you mean he's gone missing?” I work it out. I am in Memphis. The band had flown in that evening. They were due to start rehearsing straight away. Jeff was late for the session. Really fucking annoying, but he's always pulling that shit. He's just being Jeff. He wants to know everybody has missed him. He'll show up.

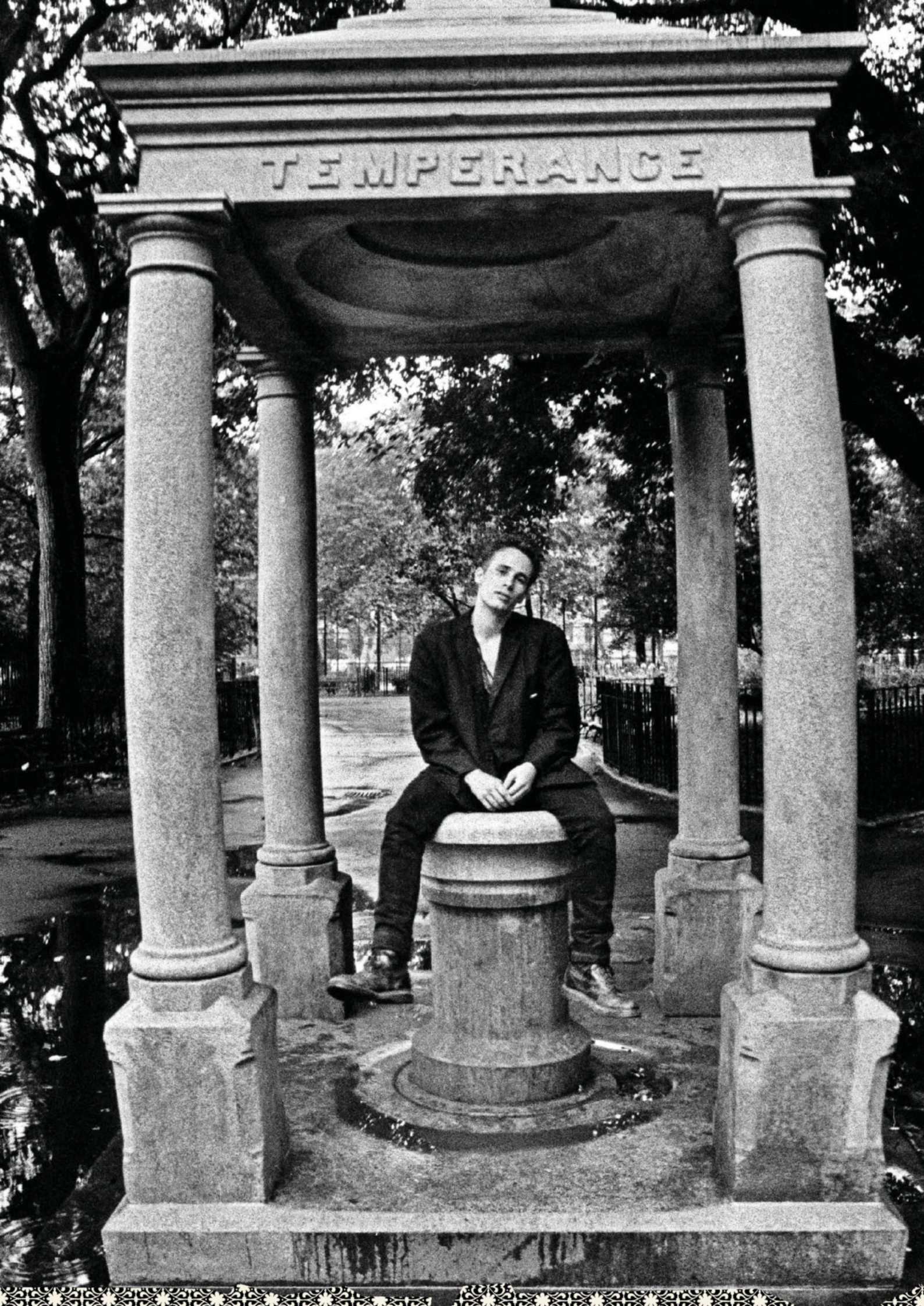
“He was swimming in the Mississippi. Two tug boats came along and he went underwater. We can't find him.”

Something punches me in my stomach with all its force. I drop the phone.

“Dave? Dave?”

I take a deep breath and pick the phone from the floor. “Shit, Gene, is this real? Am I having a bad dream?”

“It's real, Dave. There are helicopters shining searchlights on the river. There's ➤





Buckley and Dave Lory, outside Sony Studios, NYC, spring 1995; (right) Sony's ad in *Billboard*; during the shoot for the *Grace* LP cover, November 1993.

◀ a team dragging the water.”

Helicopters. That was the sound I couldn't identify. My brain doesn't know what to ask, but my mouth comes up with something.

“When did he go into the water?”

“Around 9pm,” said Gene, his voice breaking. “Four hours ago.”

“He's not coming out, is he?”

We share a silence. Into it rushes a sound like someone pounding on my hotel room door. It's blood racing around my head. I try not to pass out.

“OK. Give me a minute, Gene,” I say. “I'll call you back when I've worked out what to do, but call again if there's any development. And tell everyone there to say nothing. No press.”

PUTTING THE PHONE DOWN, I felt like I'd let go of a lifebelt at sea, a slow-motion pulse of panic and confusion. I looked around me, shocked at how tranquil it was in this room, in this hotel, considering what had just happened. Why weren't alarms ringing? Why weren't people hammering on the door? Was anyone coming to help me?

I got a sudden pang of hope. What if he'd just walked out of the river downstream, wandered dripping wet into a bar and a girl had said: “You need to get out of those wet things...” The fantasy was stupid. He was about to cut his record, for Christ's sake. He'd been hyped up about it. Excited enough, apparently, to walk fully clothed into a muddy river. Why would he ever think he wouldn't come out again? Jumping into things is what he does. He never packs a parachute or a guardian angel.

I called Katell. It was still early. I'd woken her up. I told her the news as calmly as I could. She howled with pain, dropped the phone and I heard her screaming “Nooooooo” and sobbing in the background. We were still connected. I had to run down to the lobby, call her band, tell

them to get over there, look after her and put the phone back on the hook.

Then I called Sam, my wife, who'd been Jeff's promotions manager, and Abbo [Steve Abbott head of Big Cat Records who released *Live At Sin-é* in the UK]. I was expecting Sam to be shaken and emotional but she detected the steel in my voice and was rock solid, practical, going straight into business mode. Abbo was the same. They both agreed to fly out to Dublin on the next possible plane from London to support Katell while I did what I needed to do. Tonight was her launch show. It had to go ahead.

Next, I called Howard Wuelfing, our publicist at Columbia. I woke him at around 2.30am, New York time, and asked him to go into the office and prepare a press statement. I called George Stein; Steve Berkowitz, Jeff's A&R; Andy Wallace, who was expecting to produce the new record; all the people heavily involved in Jeff's career who needed to hear the news from me first.

Finally, I asked Jack to call Jeff's mother, Mary, and have her meet me in Memphis. And all the time, something at the back of my mind was nagging, “Why Jeff, why? How could you do this?” I felt like a parent feels as they watch their child run across a busy street without looking: horror, dismay, guilt, anger, and that recurring thought, “All those times we talked about crossing the street! Were you even *listening*?”

MAY 31, 1997

AFTER KATELL'S SHOW – SHE WAS understandably shaky – I drank myself to sleep. My flight was at 6am. Dublin to Memphis with a jackhammer hangover. I watched all the passengers buzzing around me and craved their normality. None of them realised what I was dealing with. The newsstands were full of Jeff's disappearance. The TV news showed Bono stopping U2's show at

Meadowlands with a version of Hallelujah. The huge crowd paid silent tribute. That flight was the longest I ever took.

When I arrived, George, Gene, Steve and Mary were waiting for me. I told them what we were doing and asked Mary for some words for our press release. Dated Monday, June 2, the release was issued under the headline: Jeff Buckley Still Missing As Search Continues; Family And Friends Believe He Has Drowned. Mary's quotation read: “It has become apparent to me that my son will not be walking out of the river. It is now time to make plans to celebrate a life that was golden.”

Meanwhile, we had to organise sealing off Jeff's apartment in New York, talk to the band and make arrangements for them to leave Jeff's house in Memphis, meet with the police and the National Guard to discuss what would happen if Jeff was discovered, organise an autopsy, arrange the taking of DNA samples to protect his estate from any future paternity disputes, plan his eventual cremation and so on. It was terrible, shitty stuff. A chilly numbness flooded me.

Keeping me sane were my good friend Danny Goldberg and his brilliant colleague Janet Billig. Danny had managed The Allman Brothers Band with me. He and Janet had managed Nirvana together. They had been here. Danny called to check my family and I were OK as soon as he heard the news. “Dave, you're now part of a club you never want to belong to,” he said. He also said I'd get the call one day from another manager going through this. He was right; it happened a few years later when Michael Hutchence died.

JUNE 1, 1997

AFTER BREAKFAST WITH STEVE Berkowitz, I went with Keith Foti – Gene's blue-haired assistant roadie, who was with Jeff when he disappeared – to Wolf River Harbor, the scene of the incident. He told me his account of what happened. I felt sorry for him. He was still in shock and worried about getting blamed, but we all knew there was nothing more he could have done. I asked to be left alone for a minute, and I stood by the murky water trying to imagine it as night fell and wanting to walk into it. I couldn't imagine anything I'd rather do less.

“Jeff, you stupid fucking...” Tears began to gush down my cheeks. I wasn't sobbing, I just had water pouring out of me, as if something inside was trying to get to the river, join it and escape. I picked up the biggest stones on the shore and started hurling them into the water with all the fury that was rising in me.

“How dare you leave me with this shit!” I shouted, so loud that it felt like I'd pulled a muscle in my throat. I felt like I was throwing everything we'd done together into the river after him. “You promised me you

knew how to cross the road. We said we'd see this out together."

The irony wasn't lost on me. Jeff, who'd grown up fearing rejection and people walking out on him, had shoved it back in all our faces. I cried for him and I cried for us. Everything I'd bottled up these last few days drained into the river.

JUNE 2, 1997

I FELT LIKE SHIT THE NEXT MORNING, back in New York, on my way from the airport to 550 Madison Avenue, to sit in the office of Sony president Donnie Ienner, with Steve Berkowitz, Tommy Mottola, chairman of Sony Music Entertainment, and Michelle Anthony, executive vice president.

By this point I had absolutely no faith in Sony to do the right thing by Jeff. I was furious that this meeting about posthumous releases had been called so soon. I'd had a ton of calls from distressed Sony employees who also thought it was insensitive. I went around as many desks as I could to support those who were in bits over Jeff's death.

Outside Donnie's office I saw a copy of that week's *Billboard*, the trade publication. Someone had taken out a page ad with a photograph of Jeff and a line saying how much Columbia had loved him. It was a photo that people there knew Jeff hated, and when I saw it I lost it. Berkowitz saw I was fuming. "Hey Dave. Go easy in there."

I walked into Donnie's office with a tightly clenched jaw. My resolve lasted four seconds. I yelled asking why they'd called a meeting, why they'd chosen a picture Jeff hated, and why they thought we could discuss future releases before we'd even found his body. Donnie looked at me like I was a kid having a tantrum.

Finally, Tommy Mottola spoke up. Tommy was the guy who had discovered, developed and married Mariah Carey, and two days before this meeting it had been announced that their marriage was over. I bet he didn't want to be in this room either, but he laid a steadying hand on the meeting and it sighed with relief.

After I left Sony, I headed to my apartment to take a shower and repack for my

flight back to the UK. I appreciated the quiet of the empty rooms. It was around 1pm and I decided I was off duty, so poured myself two fingers of Jack Daniel's to numb the pain. Well, give it two fingers, anyhow.

Without even thinking about it, because it's what I did when I came home, I went over to the answering machine and hit the playback button. The first few messages were nothing, the dry cleaner, a friend of Sam's, and then there he was. Jeff was speaking. "Hi Samantha and Charlotte, hope you are both OK. Play the music, play it loud, love Jeff." The timer had it at about 15 minutes before he went out that evening. It could have been the last call he made.

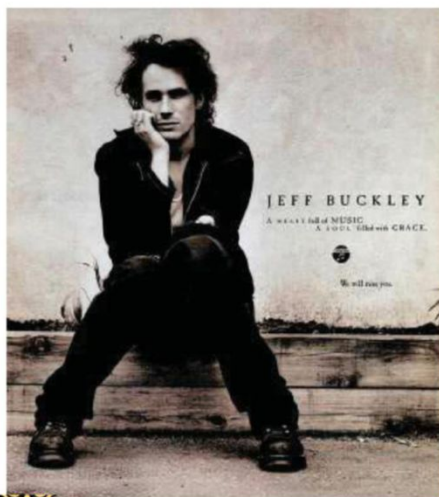
Every message after that was someone calling to see what I knew. They went from "Dave, I heard a rumour", to people just crying and screaming. It was awful, crazy, the saddest parade you ever heard go by.

I don't remember going to the airport.

JUNE 4, 1997

BACK IN LONDON. AFTER ANOTHER day of meetings I wished I wasn't having, I was collecting my key at the Royal Garden Hotel. "Mr Lory?" said a girl on the front desk. "I have a message for you." She handed me a note: "We found him. Call me. Gene." 

Dave Lory is currently writing a memoir of his time with Jeff Buckley in collaboration with MOJO's Jim Irvin.



"SOMEONE HAD TAKEN OUT A PAGE AD IN BILLBOARD. IT WAS A PHOTO THAT PEOPLE AT SONY KNEW JEFF HATED."



STARS IN

Fifty years young, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* killed **THE BEATLES** so that they might live, and unveiled a boundary-smashing philosophy that enriched all pop and rock to come. In 2017 it is reborn, augmented by revelatory outtakes and a spectacular new stereo mix: two more reasons to turn on and tune into the alpha and omega of albums and, over 20 action-packed pages, explore why it mattered – and still does. Portrait by **MICHAEL COOPER**.



STRIPES

THE LINE-UP

PAUL McCARTNEY on The Beatles in 3D p64

JON SAVAGE on the album, song by song p68

GILES MARTIN's stereo secrets p72

AND ON BACKING VOCALS:

Graham Nash, Justin Hayward,
Phil May, Glyn Johns and Eddie Kramer



“IT WAS A RISK, AND WE WERE AWARE OF THAT”

PAUL MCCARTNEY is still buzzing off *SGT. PEPPER*, 50 years on. “We were really vibing it,” he tells **DANNY ECCLESTON**.

Better, the *Pepper* overture, Good Morning, even Lovely Rita feel more muscular.

Yeah, that’s one of the things I like about it. “Muscular” is a good word; it sounds more like us playing in the room and more like we intended it. After all, sticking the drums in the middle does kind of bring it back to mono.

A more 3D version of mono...

Yes, exactly. 3D mono! You’re coming up with all the lines today. We didn’t, and I still don’t, think too technically about things. If it just sounds better, there you go. So that’s the justification for the new release. Then you can put all kinds of things in the package that weren’t there in the original. For instance: Strawberry Fields Forever and Penny Lane.

Have you ever regretted the original omission of Strawberry Fields Forever and Penny Lane?

(Super-firmly) No, we didn’t. I’m not big into regrets I must say. You make a decision and you stick with it. No, they were the precursors of *Sgt. Pepper*. It was the start of the whole thing. We knew we wanted to stretch our recordings. We knew we had more time, because we’d given up touring. We wanted to see what we could do, see how far we could stretch pop music. Realise our visions of how far out a record could be.

The outtakes really take you inside the studio. Like all the early takes of the big piano chord in A Day In The Life, where you’re telling Mal Evans which pedal to press down: “It’s the one on the right!”

I think it humanises the album so much. ‘Cos when it was released it was just, There it is, what do you make of it? People sat around and came up with all the theories about what was going on. The nice thing for me is that it reminds me of what we did. When you make a record that long ago you don’t remember all the little things you put into it. Like that final chord. I’d always thought it was a C chord. Turns out it was an E chord. It had turned into a game for us: if you press down the loud pedal and play a chord, how long can you hear that chord go on? The game was to find out. Can you hear it still? No? Just! Yeah yeah yeah! I have to say, with this re-release I’ve learned a lot about *Sgt. Pepper* that I didn’t know and a lot of stuff I didn’t remember.

You say it refreshes your memory of *Sgt. Pepper*; I also ➤

INSIDE *SGT. PEPPER’S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND* THERE LURKS A TREAT for anyone lucky enough to be opening that iconic vinyl gatefold for the very first time. And we don’t mean the set of cardboard gubbins, including moustache and sergeant’s stripes, that would fall out if you’d managed to score an un-interfered-with first edition. We’re not even talking about the 13 amazing songs that changed music utterly and resound as freshly today. No, it’s The Beatles themselves, lined up across the inside gatefold, eyeing the camera, *regarding the viewer*, with a limitless charm. There’s always been something hypnotic about that photograph. And Paul McCartney knows why.

“Because the cover had been so complex and full of stuff, it was suggested that we do some very simple portrait shots,” explains McCartney, on the phone to MOJO from his New York office. “So amongst ourselves we were like (*conspiratorial whisper*), ‘OK, let’s really look *through* the camera. *Really* vibe it. *Really* put your thoughts right through to the person looking at this. Totally try to get your energy through.’ And that’s why that picture communicates – we weren’t just sitting there passively having our pictures taken; we were really trying to *reach* the person looking at this cover.”

It’s indicative of the creative pitch The Beatles and their collaborators were humming at in early ’67 that even this simplest of undertakings – a portrait pic, not even (as yet) destined for the record sleeve – could be the platform for an idea, a theory or an experiment. In 1967, Paul McCartney and his then-bandmates were primed to beam their energy out into the world, as powerfully as they were able.

In 2017, little – at least in that respect – has changed. At 74, across the Atlantic, a familiarly blithe Macca is chucking out vibes like they’re going out of fashion, keen to offer MOJO (“Go, MOJO!” he exclaims) insights into the world of *Pepper* past, and his take on the album’s 50th anniversary package, chiefly Giles Martin’s new stereo mix. Which is where, without further ado, we begin...

What did you first think when they said, “We’re thinking of remixing *Sgt. Pepper*?” “Bloody cheek!”?

Well I’m kinda getting used to, you know, remixing, remastering, reissuing. And I’m now very happy with the idea of it. When I’m approving the new versions, I always do an ‘A’ and ‘B’ thing. I listen to the old one alongside the new one, and switch between them. With this one, there’s really quite a difference.

There was always controversy over the original stereo mix...

Well, in The Beatles we weren’t into stereo. We were totally mono freaks. We presumed that stereo meant it would be twice as loud because there were two speakers! And when we heard that you would be able to *spread* the sound out, we still weren’t interested. We gave that job to George Martin. We thought we’d finished the album. There it is. *Sgt. Pepper*. Mono.

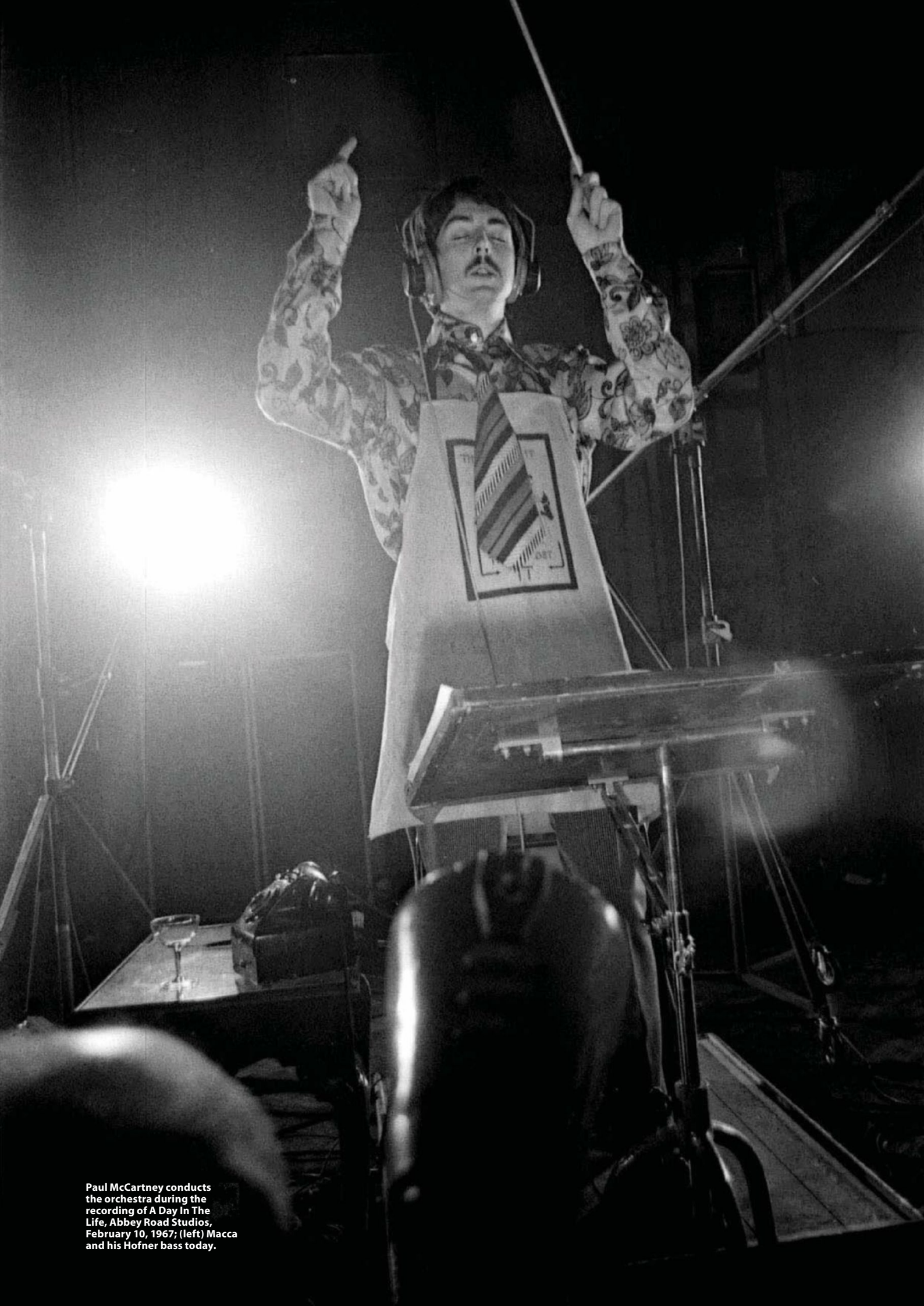
But the original stereo mix is a bit of a period piece. You’ve got the drums in one corner. You’ve got the vocals in another corner. We would be at listening parties, have some mates around and I’d go, “Listen to the drums on this, man!” ...and you couldn’t hear ‘em. Oh! They’re over there in the other corner of the room.

Then there are weird things like *She’s Leaving Home*. It was higher and faster on your mono version, slower and lower on the original stereo. That’s been restored in the new mix.

Exactly. We were always fiddling with speed and pitch. It was one of the things that kept recording fun in those days. We’d come to mixing and think, “You know, the groove should be a bit faster than how we played it.” So we would get the engineers to lift it up a little bit. It would put the song in a strange half-key. Something that was in A could end up in almost B-flat. We kinda liked the effect, how it brightened the voices a little bit, gave it a bit more punch. So I’m glad that’s back.

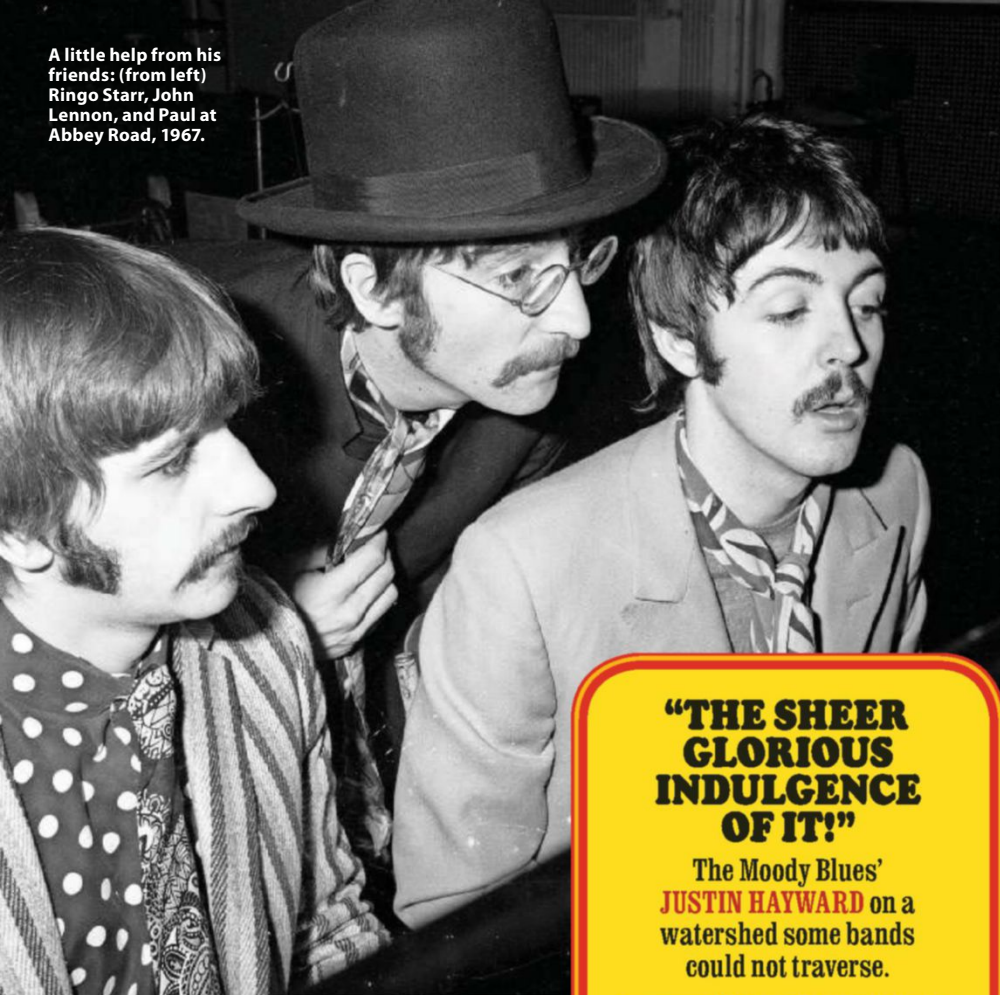
Restoring the drums to the centre – and making them louder – makes the album rock more. Getting





Paul McCartney conducts the orchestra during the recording of *A Day In The Life*, Abbey Road Studios, February 10, 1967; (left) Macca and his Hofner bass today.

A little help from his friends: (from left) Ringo Starr, John Lennon, and Paul at Abbey Road, 1967.



"THE SHEER GLORIOUS INDULGENCE OF IT!"

The Moody Blues' **JUSTIN HAYWARD** on a watershed some bands could not traverse.



We knew *Pepper* was coming as [Moody Blues' keyboard player] Mike Pinder could walk in on Beatles sessions, because he had introduced them to the mellotron.

We spent most of our time up the Abbey Road – the scruffy end! – in the Decca studios at Broadhurst Gardens. But we'd heard the news.

Four of us had dropped acid in May '67 – me, Mike, Ray [Thomas] and Graeme [Edge] – and so we were on that path. I had already bought a sitar from the same place George Harrison had. And we were already playing *Days Of Future Passed* on-stage, although we hadn't recorded it.

We got hold of an advanced copy of *Sgt. Pepper*, maybe only two days before it was due out. Me and my then girlfriend went round to this girl's flat on Marylebone High Street, got really stoned and we were there a day, maybe two days playing this record! It was the most incredible thing I'd ever heard. The sheer glorious indulgence of it. It seemed to encompass everything with a sense of humour and irony that hadn't been heard in pop records before. I remember being stunned, when *Lucy In The Sky...* suddenly goes into *Getting Better*. I've just been down there watching the grass grow and now suddenly there's this masterpiece of pop, lifting you up.

After *Pepper* it was easier to push at the boundaries of pop. Which was good news for me, because I was lousy at rhythm and blues. The Moody Blues did the Transcendental Meditation course later in '67, at the same time The Beatles were doing it, although they were they were in the upper rooms – the upper echelons!

But we were lucky, I suppose, to be in the club. A lot of groups that had had success in the previous three years couldn't make the transition. I felt bad for my pals in The Swinging Blue Jeans. The public wouldn't allow The Swinging Blue Jeans to navel gaze. They weren't allowed in.

after a week: "Er... maybe it's not so bad." But we were used to that. She Loves You was "banal". But if we liked it and thought it was cool, we would go for it.

I mean, George doing *Within You Without You*, a completely Indian record – it was nothing anyone had heard before, at least in this context. It was a risk, and we were aware of that. But it's a great track. And it opened the gates to a lot of Eastern influences entering Western culture. Combine that with the meditation thing and look at today's scene, and George opened the door to a lot of stuff.

Why "Sergeant Pepper"?

It was something I'd overheard... misheard. I was on a plane journey with Mal Evans and he said, "Pass the salt and pepper..." I thought I heard him say "Sergeant Pepper". It's in the great tradition of creative misunderstandings. I heard somewhere that William Burroughs had meant to call his book *Naked Lust*, and it was Allen Ginsberg, who was short-sighted, saw it and said "What's that? *Naked Lunch*? Fantastic!"

Anyway, my imagination just ran wild for the rest of the journey: "OK, Sergeant Pepper. This has got to be a new thing, a song or..." And seeing as though everyone was doing Soft Joe's Travelling Medicine Band With Knobs On... it was kind of a parody of that: Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band Travelling Circus, On Wheels... In Ramsgate. And then it all sort of fell into place. There's this guy and he's got this band, and that could be us. It was quite... freeing. Every time we thought, "Oh, we can't do that," it was, "Why not? It's this other group – it's not us."

If *Strawberry Fields* and *Penny Lane*, the lead tunes of an older "Back To Liverpool, Back To Childhood" idea, had been on the album, there may have been no room for the Sgt. *Pepper* concept...

(Sceptically) Maybe, but it was all just part of our development. The Beatles is a body of work I can look back on now. And it's amazing – there's no track that's ever like the last one. You look at a lot of other groups – I always mention The Supremes – poor old Supremes! I love the records, but it's Baby Love, Stop! In The Name Of Love... (sings) "Stop! In the name of love!" It's a Supremes/Motown sound and the songs are similar, tied together. We weren't doing that. We were doing Yesterday, and Strawberry Fields Forever, and When I'm Sixty-Four, and I Am The Walrus. If you study it, are there two songs that are ever really alike? We were so, "Been there, done that." And it always kept it fresh, for us. Kept it exciting.

The tracks aren't segued as such, but *Pepper* has fantastic transitions. You obviously thought those through quite carefully...

Oh I don't know about that! I'm not sure we thought about 'em carefully. A lot of them were fortunate accidents. Things that just happened to be there on the end of a take. At the end of *Within You Without You*, there's this laughter. It just popped up. Any other group would have gone, "No no no, let's have a bit of silence, a mark of respect for this beautiful Indian piece George has just recorded." But we thought it was perfect. We were in hysterics, we're laughing, it was the perfect reaction to that. And then that segues into something else...

...into *When I'm Sixty-Four*. Which is the perfect yin and yang...

A lot of it was having all the time in the world and the greatest team working with us... Everyone was involved. On [Being For The Benefit Of] Mr. Kite! we knew we could safely say to George Martin, "OK. We want it to be like a fairground." Instead of going, "What the bloody hell do they mean?", he got tapes, he cut them up, he turned

think it refreshes the songs. It's such an 'important' album, sometimes people listen to the reputation rather than hearing the record.

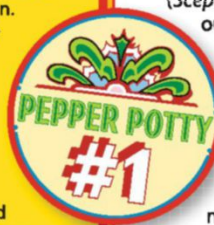
Well now that is true. That's what happens to everything that becomes – inverted commas – 'historical'. You approach it with a reverence that you shouldn't. It's just a record – but it's gained in notoriety over the years. It's actually very economical, you know, the way it's recorded.

The Beatles had gone through a lot in '66 and '67. You'd jacked in touring and taken flak from people with a stake in your success. Then there was your LSD interview, which moved the debate along but brought a lot of criticism from the media. Then *Sgt. Pepper* comes out and it's like another challenge: "The Beatles Have Gone Weird"...

But we were always being told, "You're gonna lose all your fans with this one." And we'd say, "Well, we'll lose some but we'll gain some." We've gotta advance. We can't just stop to please this current batch of fans.

It was never daunting, getting that push-back?

We'd become used to them, these kick-backs. There had been a load of things we'd done that people had said we shouldn't do. And we'd think, "Oh, maybe we shouldn't... I dunno... Should we? Shouldn't we?" Generally, we'd gone, "The hell with it, let's do it anyway." We'd become quite brave at doing what we thought was right. The first time we told people the name of the group – Beatles – they'd gone, "Ugh! Beetles! Creepy crawly things! You can't do that!" I mean now, it sounds weird to think of the creepy crawly thing. It's evaporated. And over the years our records hadn't always been liked. *Sgt. Pepper* did actually get a terrible review in the NY Times. The critic [Richard Goldstein] said he hated it, thought it was a terrible mess, and then he was on the streets all week and heard the talk, heard what people were saying, and he took it back [in a subsequent *Village Voice* piece], recanted



them backwards, he re-spliced them. When you have people like that working with you, they're gonna make everything you come up with better. Like the cover – a little idea I had and sketched up that goes out to Peter Blake – this great artist, *to this day*. Him and Jann Haworth put in their set of ideas. It becomes this collaboration with all these great people. Everyone with enough time to concentrate on what they're doing.

Horrible question: is *Sgt. Pepper* the best Beatles album?

Horrible answer: I don't know. I think it's the most

influential Beatles album. Perhaps, as you said, in inverted commas, it's the most 'important', but not necessarily the best. *Revolver* had some special moments on it. What's called *The White Album* had some very important moments on it. And *Abbey Road*. There are other albums as good in different ways. But *Pepper* is the most noticeable Beatles album because it was so different, and such a change from what was going on at the time. There were so many little things happening, and it seemed like they all culminated on *Sgt. Pepper*. But we went beyond it, did *Let It Be*, *Abbey Road*, and do you know, they weren't bad either.

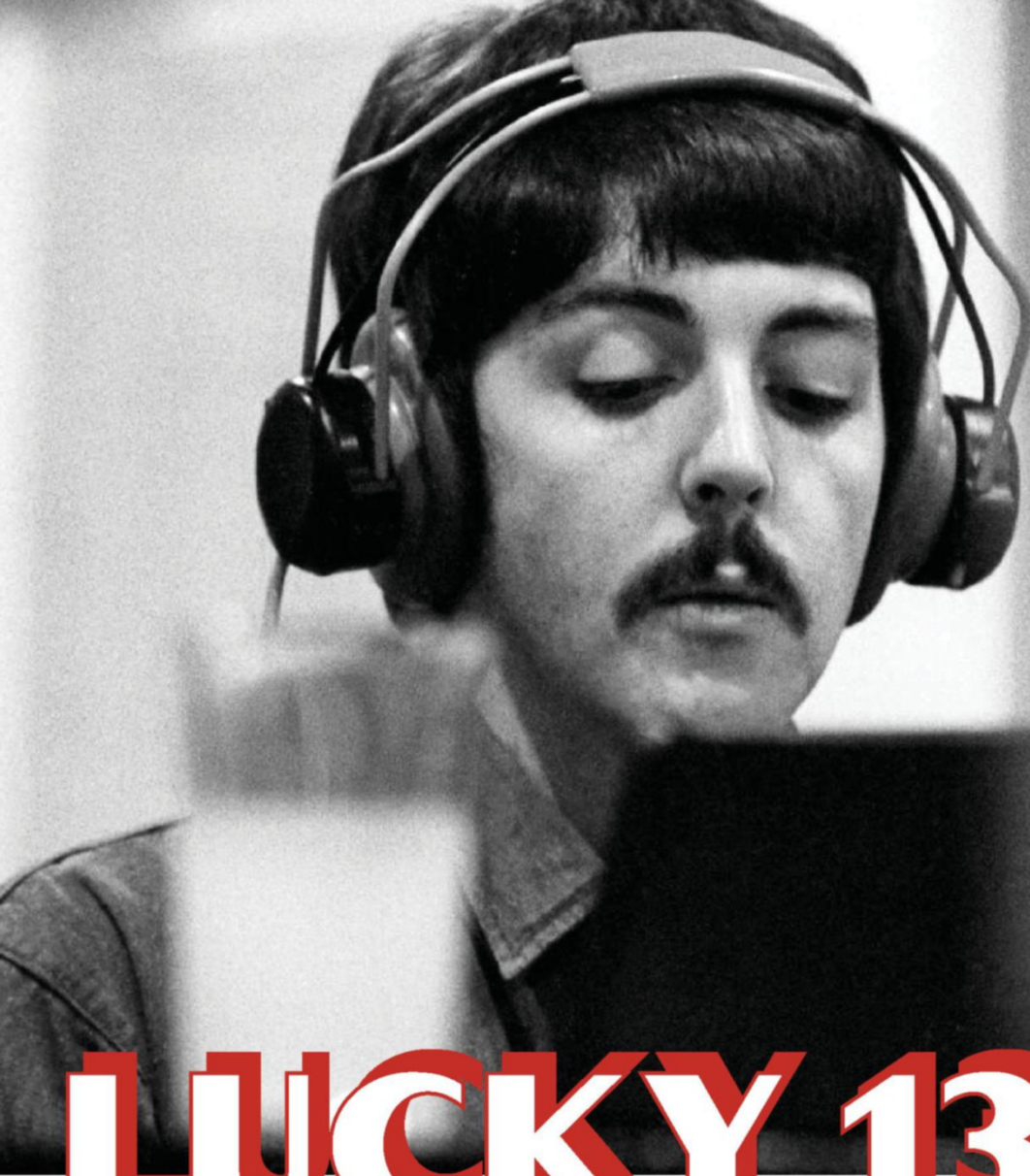
“WE WANTED TO SEE HOW FAR WE COULD STRETCH POP MUSIC. REALISE OUR VISIONS OF HOW FAR OUT A RECORD COULD BE.”



Liverpool connection: shoot for the Strawberry Fields Forever/Penny Lane picture sleeve single, George Harrison making full eye contact.

MORE PEPPER!

JON SAVAGE'S TRACK BY TRACK BREAKDOWN, THE COVER SHOT, GILES MARTIN, PAUL'S MAGIC PIANO AND MORE...



"The driving force behind this Beatles phase": McCartney pushes on; (opposite, from top right) New Vaudeville Band; Jimi Hendrix would cover Sgt. Pepper's title track on-stage; the sleeves of Strawberry Fields Forever, Pepper and Hendrix's Are You Experienced embrace the retro look to forge forward.

LUCKY 13

Regularly dubbed a work of conceptual genius, **SGT. PEPPER** was actually a product of dead ends and happy accidents, wrought just when **THE BEATLES** feared that the jig was up. **JON SAVAGE** revisits the maelstrom from which the original album emerged and hymns its bran tub of bounties, track by track.

THE FIRST SOUND YOU HEAR is ambience: pre-performance noises in a theatre, tuning up, calls and chat, movement in a confined auditorium. The first song comes in with pounding drum and bass and heavy guitar in what would soon become known as the rock style. The vocal in the first verse is full throated, pitched high like an MC to whip up enthusiasm, introducing "the act you've known for all these years" to intense overdubbed applause. Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club then sing in harmony, inviting you to "sit back and let the evening go".

As the opening song and title track of The Beatles' eighth album, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band is poised between showbiz and rock. It's the perfect orientation point for

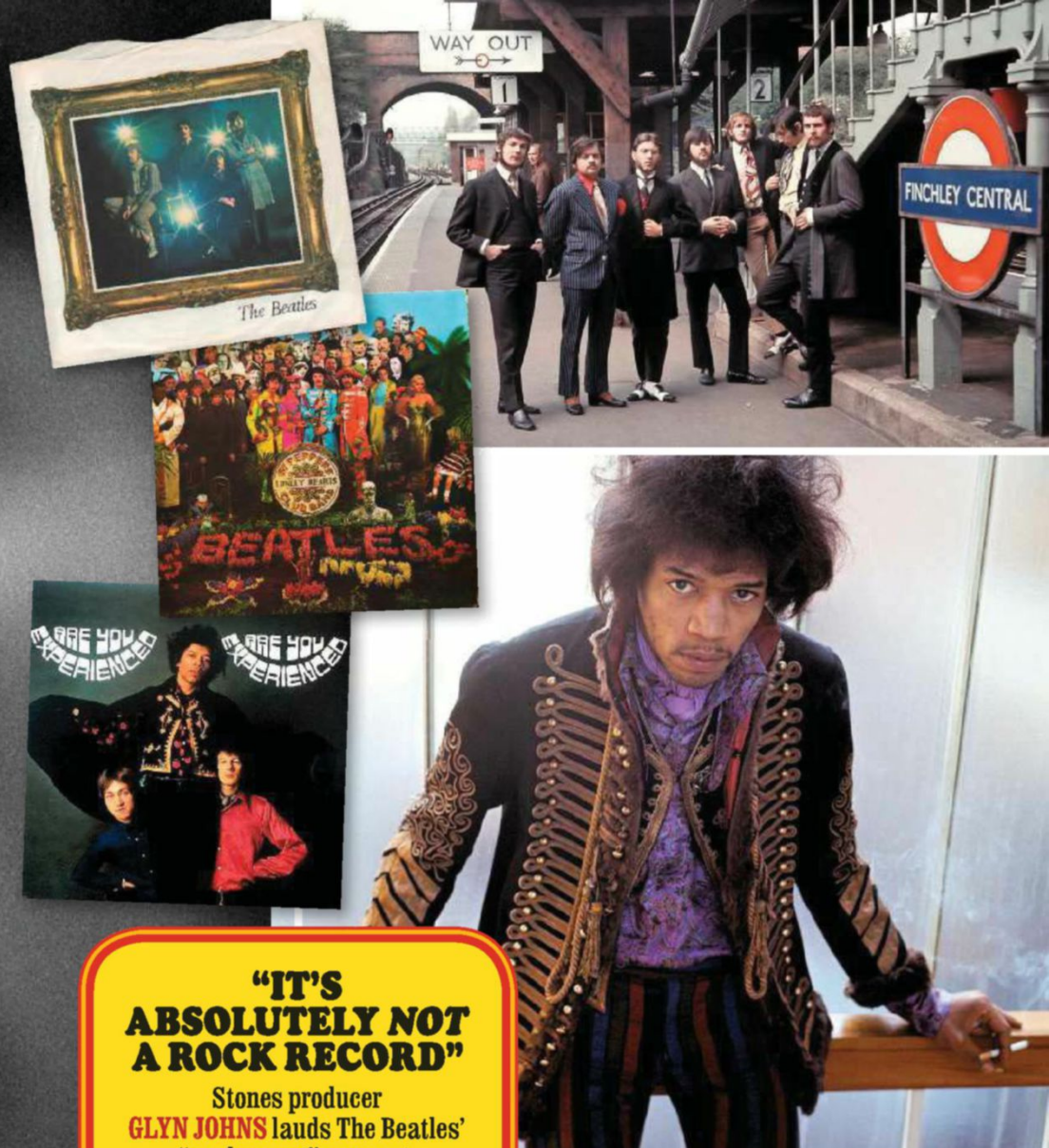
fans confused by where The Beatles had been, where they were going and exactly how they had spent their previous nine months. Who were they now? What is Beatles? Those questions had already been asked of themselves by the musicians, with no little soul-searching, and the answers leak all over this apparently seamless record.

For *Sgt. Pepper* is defined by absence. On September 1, 1966, The Beatles returned from an extremely stressful American tour with the firm determination never to play live again. There was no announcement, no plans either. They dissolved into thin air. During that autumn, their continued disappearance opened up a profound vacuum. After three months, pop fans were becoming restless; everyone was agreed that, as Pete Townshend told *Disc And Music Echo* in mid-December, "we need The Beatles to sort things out".

The signs were not hopeful. In the interviews the group gave during their time off, they were in turns dismissive – "Everything we've done so far has been rubbish," George Harrison told Don Short – or alienated from their group identity: as John Lennon informed Leonard Gross in Spain, "We're not The Beatles at all. We're just us." When they finally regrouped at Abbey Road in December, they appeared changed: engineer Geoff Emerick observed that they "seemed almost robbed of their youth."

Sgt. Pepper began in alienation, distance and doubt and sought to transform these states through artifice. The group's withdrawal at the height of their fame had disconnected them from their audience; somehow they had to establish a new dialogue with their listeners that would make sense of their extraordinary situation.

Early on, they decided the new album would be themed, thus creating its own event. Their first idea was to make it a collection of songs about memory: The Beatles' use of LSD had opened up childhood memories and traumas. They had come so far that they



"IT'S ABSOLUTELY NOT A ROCK RECORD"

Stones producer
GLYN JOHNS lauds The Beatles'
"modern art" moment.

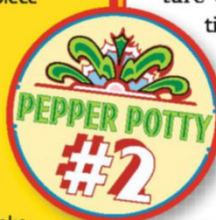


My perspective was a bit different from everyone because I'm a balancing engineer and they used balance on that record in a revolutionary way. To me it was like looking at

the most obscure piece of modern art after spending ages looking at a classic piece of portraiture. The bravery was remarkable, and I'm quite convinced it was the band that drove it. George Martin's role was that he provided the environment, the facility, and the support. There aren't many people from George's background who would have understood the music The Beatles were trying to make at the time, but his input from a classical perspective was perfect.

After *Pepper* came out, Mick [Jagger] took me to a café across the road from Olympic Studios and said, "You've got to come up with some new sounds." I said, "That's your job." Of course, the album that they made was *Their Satanic Majesties Request* which is a terrible record. It was their attempt to compete with *Pepper* and it just didn't work. Did they regret it? It was never discussed again.

I've often wondered if someone other than The Beatles – who were obviously the biggest band in the world at that time – had made that record, whether anyone would have actually heard the album because it was so far out there. But it's strange – I don't really know whether you can say *Pepper* has a legacy because no other albums sound like it. In fact, I don't really know if there's an album that comes close to it. Is it even a rock record? No, it's absolutely *not* a rock record. It stands pretty much alone.



for the film *The Family Way* – set in Lancashire – and this version of the north-western collective memory (which would resurface in the municipal-style floral display on Sgt. Pepper's cover) fused with the vogue for retro that had afflicted British pop culture during 1966, via fashionable bou-

tiques like I Was Lord Kitchener's Valet and hit tunes like the N Vaudeville Band's Winchester Cathedral (Number 1 US while When I'm Sixty-Four was recorded).

As The Beatles recorded through February and March before the wrap in the first week of April, the strict theme went by the board: even so, the mundane was tackled in She's Leaving Home, Fixing A Hole and Lennon's Good Morning Good Morning, while songs like Being For The Benefit Of Mr. Kite! and Only A Northern Song roughly fitted the Northern/retro theme. Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds all-too-accurately reproduced the reversion to childhood wonder often stimulated by LSD.

DRUGS WERE INESCAPABLE ON Sgt. *Pepper*, enhancing the album's undertow of distance. References abound in the songs, not just in Lucy's florid imagery but in lines like "Found my way upstairs and had a smoke" and "I get ➤

all felt the need for some grounding. So the forthcoming record would delve into their recent past as Beatles at the same time as examining their upbringings in Liverpool: rooting their own extraordinary experiences in the everyday.

The first three songs recorded adhered to this script: Strawberry Fields Forever and Penny Lane focused on adolescence and childhood, while When I'm Sixty-Four harked back to the group's Cavern days. However, commercial dictates intruded: in January, it was decided to hive off the first two for release as The Beatles' next single. In what George Martin later admitted was one of his worst professional mistakes, this precluded them from being included on the forthcoming album.

Begun on February 1 – by which time promos of the new single were being prepared – a new song revealed an amended concept and gave it the perfect introduction. The Beatles were no longer 'Beatles': they were Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band – a stalking horse that conflated the recent American vogue for retro/complex names (Jefferson Airplane, The Sopwith Camel etc) and the band's own roots.

The driving force behind this Beatle phase, Paul McCartney had spent much of autumn 1966 writing brass band themes



Candid on camera: Paul talks LSD in an interview at home in St John's Wood, London, June 1967; (left) Lennon on the shoot at Knole Park, Sevenoaks, for the Strawberry Fields Forever promotional film; (insets) Monterey declares the Summer of Love; The Game's controversial single.



“high with a little help from my friends”. Whether The Beatles liked it or not – and at least one of them would fuel the flames – the June release of *Sgt. Pepper* dropped right into a growing scandal about pop music and escalating drug use amongst American and British youth.

It had been building all year, as adults finally worked out what pop stars had been singing about in lyrics that mentioned “dreams” and “minds”. Records by The Smoke (My Friend Jack, about an associate who “eats sugar lumps”) and The Game (Addicted Man, which exhorted the listener to “take it, boy, and hit the ceiling”) fell foul of a growing moral panic – which became a national issue after the February 12 police raid on Redlands’ and subsequent conviction of Keith Richards and Mick Jagger for drug offences.

The pre-release of *Sgt. Pepper* was dominated by this panic. In early May, Disc And Music Echo reported that A Day In The Life was banned by Los Angeles radio stations “because it allegedly refers to drugs”. On May 19, the BBC banned the song on the day that a preview party for the album was held at Brian Epstein’s Chapel Street house. This was the first time that the four Beatles had faced the press as a group since September 1966.

Journalists commented on how much The Beatles had changed with their moustaches and flowing clothes. They were still fielding questions about whether or not they would tour again as well as discussing the BBC ban. As Paul McCartney told Ray Coleman rather disingenuously, “If they want to ban A Day In The Life that’s their business. Drugs must have been in their minds – not ours. And the point is, banning it doesn’t help. It just draws attention to a subject.”

Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band was released on June 1: it immediately went to the top of the LP charts. Just over two weeks later, on June 16, LIFE printed a piece about The Beatles in which McCartney talked

about LSD: “After I took it, it opened my eyes. We only use one tenth of our brain. Just think what we all could accomplish if we could only tap that hidden part!” That same day, the Monterey Festival began. The event launched ‘The Summer of Love’ and cemented the emergent drug culture in the eyes of the media.

On the 19th, McCartney confirmed that he had taken LSD in a prickly interview broadcast on the ITN news at 9pm. The secret was out. The biggest group in the world were acid-heads, and the formerly most reasonable member was talking about the drug in positive terms on national television. Meanwhile, *Sgt. Pepper* and Jimi Hendrix’s *Are You Experienced* (released in late May) sat at Number 1 and Number 2 in the UK album charts, confirming the inauguration of the album era.

With hindsight, what is extraordinary about *Sgt. Pepper* is just how successful The Beatles’ reinvention was. It was by no means a done deal in mid-1967: major pop stars did not disappear without risk, and the group knew it. Meanwhile, their re-emergence in alignment with the more controversial aspects of the youth culture was likely to estrange part of their audience. But the album worked because of its near-perfect balance. *Sgt. Pepper’s* artifices were so brilliantly constructed – the varied material, the bright arrangements, the inspired segues and the shimmering, luxurious production – that its darker undertow was kept hidden, practically until its climax.

At a time of generational division, The Beatles took care to be inclusive, with songs ostensibly for children, songs that looked benignly at the square and the elderly, and songs that couched the hallucinatory quality of the mundane in colloquial lyrics and understandable everyday references. The result was a smashing success, as *Sgt. Pepper* went to Number 1 in the US for over three months and stayed at the top in the UK until November 1967. It brought together and inspired a vast and positive youth culture – the disillusion would come later – that responded in kind to its simultaneous generosity and strangeness.

**“AFTER I TOOK
LSD, IT OPENED
MY EYES. WE
ONLY USE ONE
TENTH OF OUR
BRAIN.” PAUL**



The acid test: (clockwise from top left) The Smoke, Cream, The Wizard Of Oz; I Was Lord Kitchener's Valet.



SIDE 1

1: SGT. PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND

The Showstopping Opener

THE IDEA THAT A LONG-PLAYER could be more than two hits and a whole load of filler had been challenged by The Beatles from the off, and in 1966 there had been many albums that worked as a whole over 40 minutes or so (*Revolver*, *Pet Sounds*, *Blonde On Blonde*). At a stroke, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band the song introduced an ambitious structure. The 'concept album' would soon become an obsession among pop's cutting edge.

With its hefty beat, punchy production, and George Harrison's wild acid tones near the end, it's also one of the album's few genuinely heavy moments, a canny mixture of old-style variety ("You're such a lovely audience") and the hard-edged sound pioneered by Jimi Hendrix and Cream: a tribute repaid when Hendrix covered the tune in high profile shows that summer.

It's actually somewhat ironic that, although *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* is thought to begin the rock album era, it is generally light on what would become cast in iron as the new rock style. Schooled in pop virtues, The Beatles were rarely comfortable with heaviness, and, indeed, the many roles and styles inhabited on *Sgt. Pepper*, the album, went directly

against the ethic of authenticity that would become a hallmark of post-1968 rock. Lennon in particular would proceed to disavow *Sgt. Pepper* as overproduced and fake, but that was to apply hindsight. It is the very quality of empathy – of understanding the lives of others as well as representing oneself – that appealed to the mass market in 1967.

The song ends on a rising build as Paul McCartney keeps the artifice going in his introduction of the next vocalist: 'Billy Shears'. The feel of the song would be developed in the group's next major project, *Magical Mystery Tour* – with its simultaneously fond and wry look at the Northern culture of The Beatles' youth. In the meantime, this uncanny fusing of nostalgia and distance allowed this perfectly pitched overture to appeal to adults, uncommitted youth and adepts simultaneously. The group and their audience might feel as though they're in a play, but they are anyway.

2: WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

The Intended Message

THE CARE TAKEN OVER *SGT. PEPPER*'S sequencing is evidenced by the placement of this as the first full song after the overture. This would carry the mood of the album and having Ringo, AKA Billy

Shears, sing it was a masterstroke. Starr's honk is the group's secret weapon: his everyman persona (and indeed the slight strain as he hits the high notes) grounds the others' airy concepts and alienated musings in a simple statement of unity and togetherness.

Everyone knows who his friends are: they are The Beatles and they are back together. Beginning with an expression of insecurity, the song adapts the "one for all, all for one" Beatles founding myth to the utopian positivity of the Love Generation as it spread from southern California in early 1967. It hadn't yet hit London, but sometime Beatles press officer Derek Taylor was writing about this "dream future" every week in *Disc*, spreading the word of Love to the uninitiated British.

Like that other great 20th century artefact, *The Wizard Of Oz*, *With A Little Help From My Friends* is a parable about collective action: namely that the deficiencies of four individuals can be transformed, with kindness and mutual support, into an unstoppable whole. Indeed, this was one of the premises behind the mass popularity of four/five-man (and they were mostly men) pop groups from 1963 on, as opposed to the solo artists of the previous generation.

Revolver's *Yellow Submarine* had hinted at

the ideal of collectivity but this keynote track made it completely clear. Like much of *Sgt. Pepper*, it was composed in fits and starts – a kind of dreamy displacement activity. Accordingly, this apparently upbeat tune has little ellipses through: "What do you see when you turn out the light/I can't tell you, but I know it's mine..."

Beatles albums were filleted for covers as soon as they appeared. With its pole position and timely sentiment, this was top of the list. A quick, almost note-for-note cover by The Young Idea made the Top 10 in July 1967, but it was Joe Cocker & The Grease Band's radical five-minute makeover in the bombastic heavy style that went to Number 1 in November 1968 – by which time the whole idea of love and peace was looking rather frayed.

3: LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS

The Child's Eye View

PEPPER'S FIRST OVERT PSYCHE-delic statement, not just in the lyric, but in the sound picture created by George Harrison's droning tambura and Paul McCartney's Lowrey organ. After Lennon's

Continues on page 74



THE SON ALSO MIXES

Remixing the new stereo *Sgt. Pepper* and curating outtakes for its deluxe incarnations: a daunting duty, but all in a year's work for **GILES MARTIN**, Son Of Sixth Beatle. "I don't want *Pepper* to ever sound 'old,'" he tells **DANNY ECCLESTON**.

IT'S MARCH 8, 2017 – a year to the day since the passing of Beatles producer George Martin. But in a moody, mustard-coloured mixing suite at Abbey Road Studios, where MOJO hears Martin's commanding voice intoning bar numbers on an unreleased complete take of *A Day In The Life*, he's an ineffable presence.

"Everything I've been to in the last year, people come up and talk to me like it's a wake," says Giles, Martin's son and sonic heir. "And when people want to have that conversation you can't switch it to, 'Did you see the cricket,' or, 'How about Spurs?'" Sometimes, I'm like (looks heavenwards) – "Dad – I'm in a wake!"

Forty-seven but still boyish, Martin Jr strikes you as having few, if any, 'dad issues'. Since the early '90s, when he was brought in to help on the production of *Anthology 2*, he's been in the family business, and since helming the reimagining of Beatle songs for the soundtrack to the Vegas stage show *Love*, he's been the one considered brave or foolish or trustworthy enough to tinker with the legacy. In the year since he lost his father, he's been busy – constructing (with Abbey Road Senior Engineer Sam Okell) a future-fit stereo mix and curating unreleased outtakes for this reissue on *Sgt. Pepper's* 50th. Is 'why' a silly question?

"No, because that's the first question I ask myself," says Martin. "Originally, I was against remixing *The Beatles*... But there's a technical answer, which is that the stereo mix was never theirs and the mono mix, which they did themselves and is superior, does sound 'old', like it was done 50 years ago. But this is one of the most important albums of all time – I don't want it to ever sound 'old'. Nor do *The Beatles*. How is *Pepper* going to stand next to everything in the streaming world, with people flicking and swiping?"

After finding himself, via a detour into 5.1 surround sound, mixing a new stereo version of *Strawberry Fields Forever* for 2015's 1+ audio-visual package, Martin's methodology for improving *The Beatles'* dated early stereo was fairly fixed. "I'd had this idea about mono-ing the stereos, if that makes sense," he explains. "Moving the vocals into the centre. It makes it sound more direct and *The Beatles* are better when they're more direct."

Years spent calling up tapes from the Abbey Road archives meant Martin knew the

components intimately. Some of his solutions even recall wheezes his father might have used.

"For *Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds*, I had this idea of chopping up the keyboard notes so they could be spread across the stereo spectrum. Then you put them all on a plate reverb so the notes don't sound disconnected. Then I can have the voice in the centre, because I have this stereo keyboard underneath. That's a good example of mixing ahead in your brain."

But Martin's aware of the dangers of taking too many liberties, and while many of his adjustments have bolstered *Pepper's* heft and raw volume, some adjustments had to be more subtle.

"...Like on *A Day In The Life*," says Martin, "there's something so intense about the mono. It's deep and honky, and other-worldly. But the old stereo, with the voice coming from the side, coming from nowhere, there's something brilliant about that, too. Next to that, voices in the middle sound boring. So with that, it was about getting a balance between 'mono' and 'stereo'. Ultimately, it's all to do with how the track makes you feel."

Decisions made by *The Beatles* in the mono mix – like the speed and pitch of *She's Leaving Home*, which are faster and a semitone higher in the mono than the original stereo mix (on *Lovely Rita*, that's reversed) were reproduced in the new mix. "Far more agonising," says Martin, were the decisions involved in the outtake material.

"Selecting the work-in-progress is much tougher because... I haven't got *The Beatles* here," he says. "I haven't got my dad here to make the decision."

Wading among Giles's selections, you're in the midst of *The Beatles'* music-making – why they pursued some paths and not others. An early *Getting Better* is a noodle-athon that underlines its wistful chord structure; *The Beatles* warm a place for *A Day In The Life's* earth-shattering piano chord with unison vocal "ommmmmmmmm!" and various uncoordinated piano takes.

"I'd never heard the piano sessions before," says Martin, surprisingly. "That's a lot of fun – seeing the flipside of this iconic moment. It shows it's the idea and thought process that gets you there, not happenstance and luck. Anyone can play a piano chord – even [Beatle roadie/minder] Mal Evans. But they tried it and tried it until they got it right. I love the humanisation of it. That's what touches us, I think."

Again and again, Martin's journey into the tapes revealed *The Beatles'* sureness of touch, the speed with which they arrived at durable arrangements and technical ideas, and the sturdiness and musicality of the basic tracks. Martin chooses two words carefully: "genius" and "efficiency".

"They all had such self-belief," says Martin. "I had this conversation with my dad, a week or so

before a year ago today. I said, 'Dad, did you ever think you weren't any good at music?' He closed his eyes, and said, 'No... I always thought I was brilliant!'

"It wasn't arrogance. He was a nice bloke, my dad. But they all had that thing – 'We're going to do this, and it's going to be brilliant.' That's what you get off *Sgt. Pepper*, a sense of their faith in themselves."

"I LOVE THE HUMANISATION OF IT. THAT'S WHAT TOUCHES US, I THINK."
GILES MARTIN

TWICE AS NICE

The Beatles



Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band [50th Anniversary Edition]

APPLE: CD/DL/LP

Stereo remix and avalanche of extras in variously expensive configurations. PLUS! Free bone of contention!

HATE THE idea of remixing *The Beatles'* Smacks to you of sacrilege? Then look away now – there is little for you in any of the variants of this new incarnation of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Not even the 32(ish) variously revealing, previously unreleased takes scattered across its formats will assuage you.

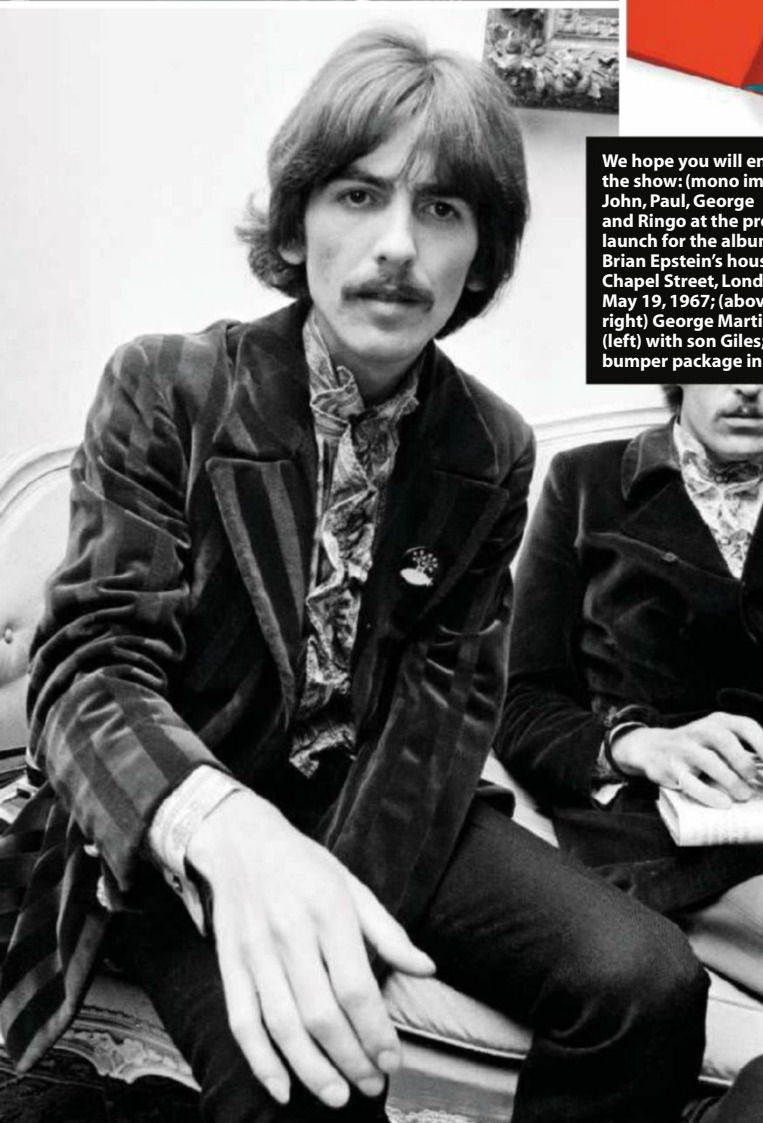
And yet it's hard to imagine anyone feeling too precious about *Pepper's* original stereo. Among aficionados it is no more widely loved than the stereo of *Pink Floyd's The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*, Abbey Road's second-best coup/cock-up of that fecund year. The best you can say is that it is what it is – signed-off, historical – and that many of us grew up on it.

It's harder still to deny that Giles Martin's new mix gets off to a flier – on CD and vinyl versions alike – with heavy oomph and immersiveness that adds much to the *Pepper* overture. All of the new mix's strengths are writ large here. Ringo is restored. The voices feel 'properly' balanced and positioned. And in general, where there was whimsy (the *bête noire* of most *Pepper* agnostics) the power of solid drums and central voices irons it out. So if you've ever found *Fixing A Hole* or *Lovely Rita* more than faintly irking here's a partial antidote. In fact, it's only on *A Day In The Life*, where (as Giles Martin concedes) the to-the-side voices added to the delicious disorientation, that you find yourself mourning aspects of the '67 stereo, and that's soon dispelled by the apocalyptic depth and resonance of that final chord.

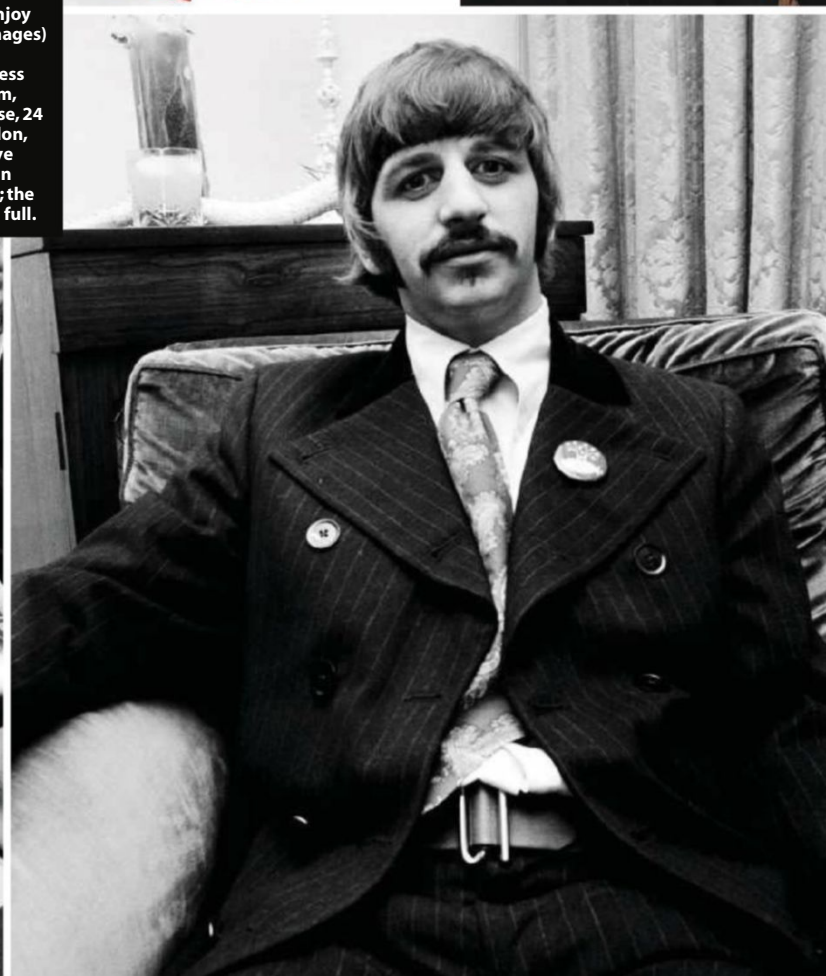
The 'DeLuxe' CD version of the new package offers the new mix plus a disc of outtakes – an alternative for each song, in original album order – and stereo mixes of *Strawberry Fields Forever* and (all-new, benefiting from the discovery of a 'lost' 4-track of piano, harmonium and drum components, pre-bounced down) of *Penny Lane*. It's no slouch, but at the same time, pales rather in comparison with the 'Super DeLuxe' box: 6 discs; 52 bonus tracks; impressive, multi-valenced book(let); plus slide-over lenticular (ie, 3D) sleeve/cover. It's not cheap, but it may be the single most exciting Beatle product since *Anthology 2*.

Will it thrive or revive, as intended, in a world of swiping and streaming? Who knows. Sonic fashions change and nothing is futureproof; Giles Martin's mixes will someday sound as of-their-time as his dad's '67 stereos. What won't change is the music, or the fact that it's best experienced in one 43-minute sitting (no *Pepper* track, with the exception perhaps of *A Day In The Life*, stands outside its context like *Norwegian Wood*, or *Tomorrow Never Knows*, or *Dear Prudence*...). It's an album – maybe the album. Swipe that.

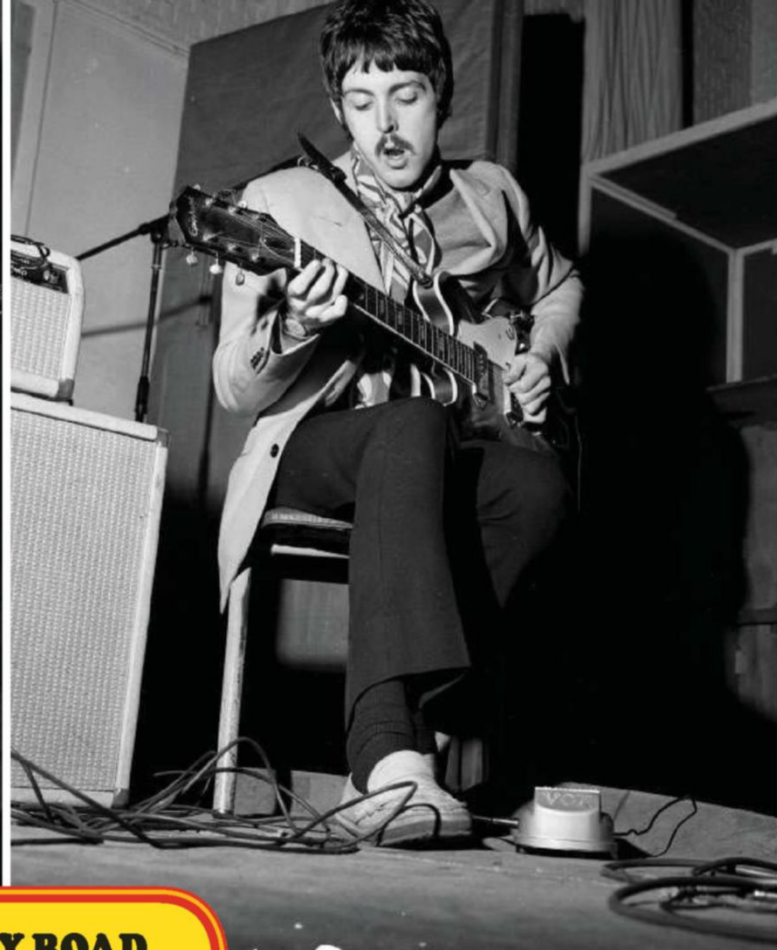
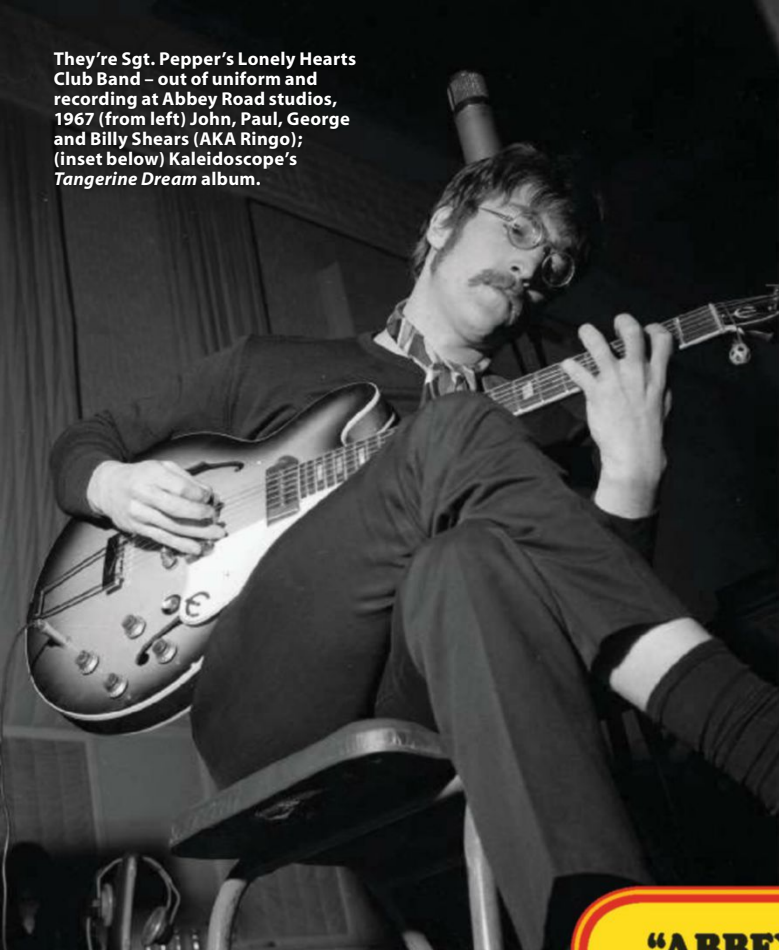
Danny Eccleston



We hope you will enjoy the show: (mono images) John, Paul, George and Ringo at the press launch for the album, Brian Epstein's house, 24 Chapel Street, London, May 19, 1967; (above right) George Martin (left) with son Giles; the bumper package in full.



They're Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band – out of uniform and recording at Abbey Road studios, 1967 (from left) John, Paul, George and Billy Shears (AKA Ringo); (inset below) Kaleidoscope's *Tangerine Dream* album.



Continued from page 71

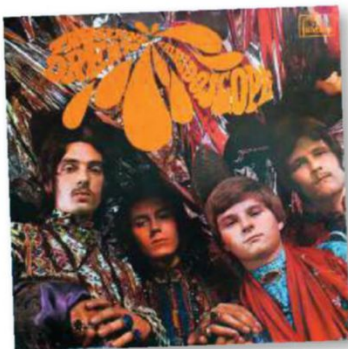
terse lyrics on *Revolver*, it's somewhat of a shock to hear him burbling on about "tangerine trees and marmalade skies" but such simple surrealism backs up the claim that the song was inspired by his four-year-old son Julian rather than LSD.

Even so, it's hard to ignore the influence of hallucinogenic drugs in such a lavish production. Lennon's vocal is compressed and down in the mix: he sounds like the old man of Tomorrow Never Knows as he intones lines like "Everyone smiles as you drift past the flowers/that grow so incredibly high". In the early stages of its use, LSD encouraged a reversion to childhood – a state brilliantly captured by Lennon himself

on She Said She Said.

Despite a stomping chorus, this evocation of innocence skims by: unlike the rest of the album, there is no counterpoint

of unease or psychological insight. Nevertheless, with its dreamy gloss it has its place as the most imitated 1967 pop move. Its influence can be seen in all the childlike songs about tangerines *et al* that followed – most obviously in Kaleidoscope's great November 1967 pop-psych album *Tangerine Dream*. And, it should be noted, *Sgt. Pepper's* 'fake band' concept has already evaporated.



"ABBEY ROAD ITSELF WAS A MASSIVE FACTOR"

GRAHAM NASH on how home comforts fuelled music from another planet.



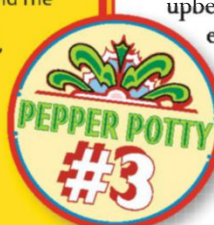
The Hollies were The Beatles' Parlophone labelmates and we were even recording at Abbey Road at the same time. But the *Sgt. Pepper* sessions seemed quite

secretive, like they had an extra mysterious edge to them. I remember getting a tape off Brian Epstein and The Turtles coming over to my apartment, straight off the plane, with my old friend Allan McDougall, who was a BMI songwriter. I proceeded to get them really high with this hash pipe I had, and then I said, Are you really, really high yet? And they said, "Yes," and I put *Sgt. Pepper* on full blast. And it was astonishing to see the effect it had.

Which tracks particularly blew our minds? Yikes! Well, She's Leaving Home – what a beautiful piece of music. And A Day In The Life – above everything else on the record, A Day In The Life was almost from another planet.

The record is total genius, and let's get real here, I don't think there will ever be a group as brilliant as The Beatles, but I think Abbey Road itself was a massive factor. Abbey Road was comfort. It was repeatability. You knew that if you put your drums in that particular place they sounded great. You could trust the studio and you could forget it.

Sgt. Pepper taught people that the imagination really can be fully represented on a pop record. Think of Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds – unbelievably forward-thinking music. You really had to absorb every microsecond of it. And it's still the same today. I listened to *Sgt. Pepper* two nights ago and it still gives me the same feeling of... Holy shit!



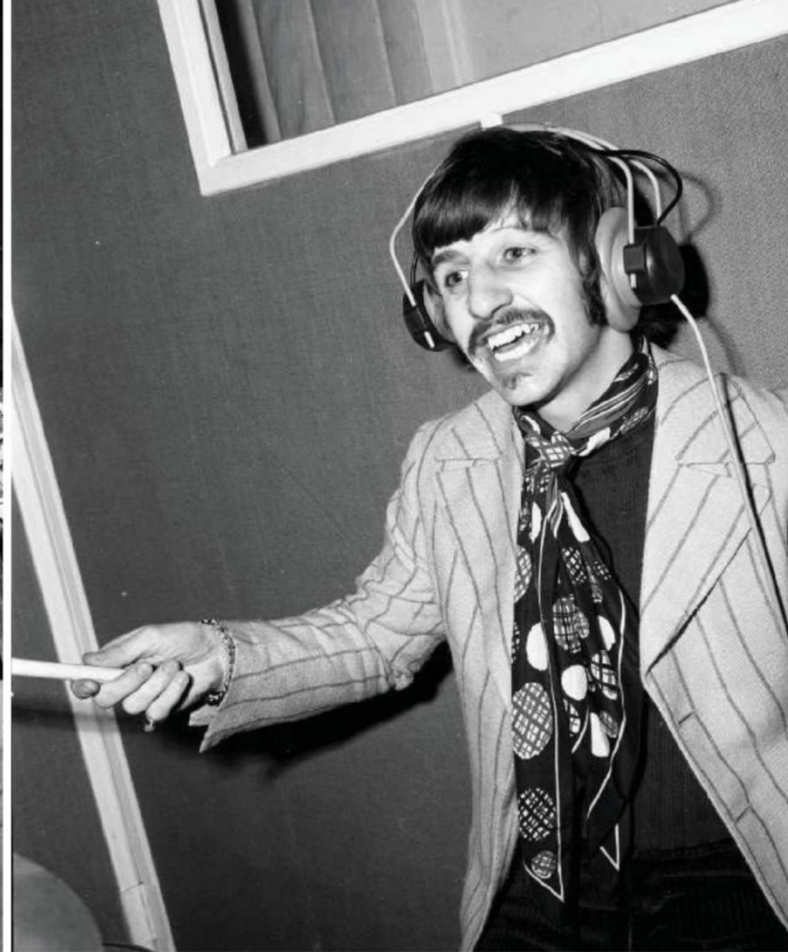
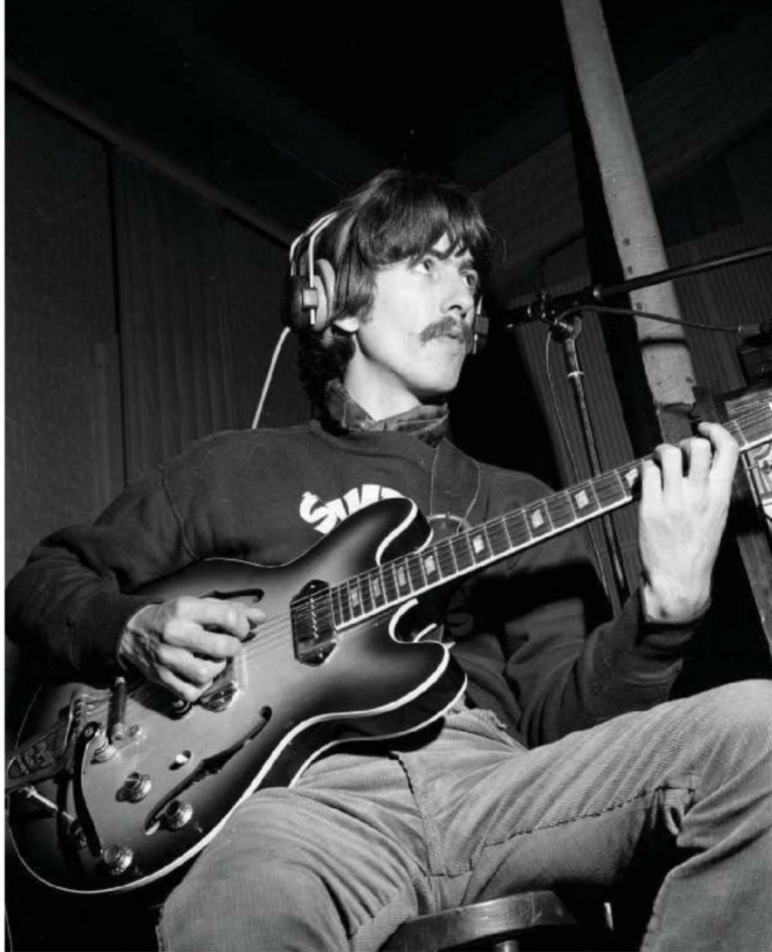
4: GETTING BETTER

The First Sermon: On Personal Development

GETTING BETTER CAN FEEL somewhat buried mid-side but it reveals itself as one of the album's most substantial pieces. Driven by quick-fire guitar stabs, the song's driving pace matches a lyric that discusses positivity and self-knowledge as a goal of personal growth. An upbeat McCartney breezes through evocations of an angry adolescence into the present time: "It's getting better, a little better all the time..."

Underscored by a buzzing tambura, the third verse admits a shocking revelation written by Lennon: "I used to be cruel to my woman/I beat her and kept her apart from the things that she loved." This was one result of LSD use: a deeper understanding of self. Realisations like this eventually moved Lennon towards his partnership with Yoko Ono – one of greater equality rather than 1950s-style pipe-and-slippers chauvinism.

Fading on counterpointed guitar pings, Getting Better emphasises the distance between past and present that is one of the album's underlying themes – and furthermore, makes it clear that a proper understanding of the past can enhance the present and future. This is a sophisticated message that did not result in a slew of covers nor any obvious influence on the psychedelic tsunami to come: an omission



that makes the song still sound fresh and pertinent, nearly 50 years later.

5: FIXING A HOLE

Concerning Self-Discipline

THIS SONG HAS ITS ORIGIN IN The Beatles' 1966 lay-off, during which McCartney began fixing the property that he had bought to the south of Campbelltown on the Kintyre peninsula. Nothing could have been further from The Beatles' previous life, as McCartney makes clear in a lyric that speaks of solitude and physical work as a healthy antidote to the pop star madness. As he writes about the fans congregating outside his London house, "See the people standing there who disagree and never win/And wonder why they don't get in my door."

Beginning with a harpsichord, pepped up by some stinging Harrison guitar lines and a sharp, albeit brief solo, Fixing A Hole was thought to refer to hard drugs but is not about that at all. If anything, it's about the hard work needed to naturally get to the enlightened states that might have been suggested by drugs — and indeed it points forward to the group's late-summer assumption of meditation with the Maharishi. Quietly effective, albeit with sharp bursts of anger, it slipped by unnoticed among the album's bigger beasts.

Prompts and cues: John and Cynthia, Getting Better; Maharishi Mahesh Yogi; poster with Mr. Kite; Nilsson covers She's Leaving Home.

6: SHE'S LEAVING HOME

An Examination Of The Generation Gap

THE THIRD SONG IN A ROW principally written by McCartney, She's Leaving Home is related with a rare attention to detail and empathy for both parties. Like Yesterday and Eleanor Rigby, it is carried not by Beatle instrumentation but by a string section — scored not by George Martin but by Mike Leander: the consequent tip towards sentimentality works well against McCartney's restrained but passionate vocal.

This is not rock but a contemporary playlet, along the lines of Cathy Come Home, rooted in reality. As McCartney told Barry Miles in 1997, the song had its origins in a newspaper story about a Beatles fan, Melanie Coe. The split between the generations is enacted by the voices of McCartney

and Lennon, who in counterpoint state: "We gave her everything money could buy/Fun is the one thing that money can't buy."

Revealing the hurt that lay behind youth's desire for freedom and the distress that it caused to parents and the older generation, She's Leaving Home was not rated by the pop cognoscenti but was nevertheless a core element in the album's wider appeal. Much discussed in the mainstream media at the time, it was quickly covered by Beatle favourite Harry Nilsson and, during the next five years, by artists as diverse as Richie Havens and Syreeta Wright.

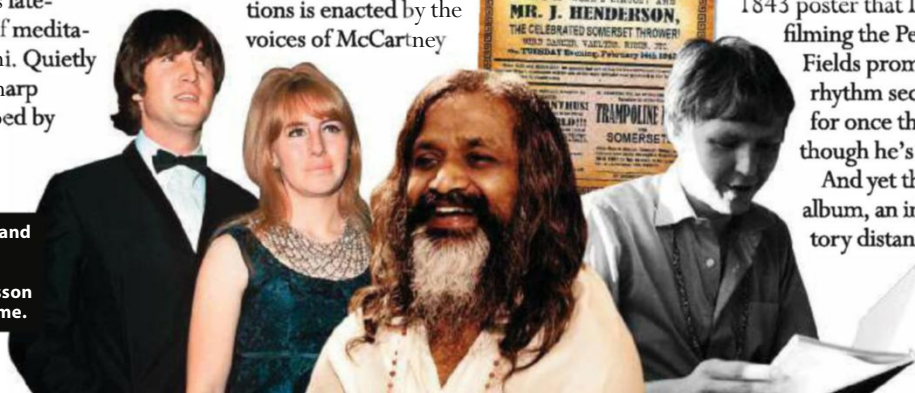
7: BEING FOR THE BENEFIT OF MR. KITE!

A Brief But Transporting Entertainment

IN WHICH LENNON WAKES UP Despite his later repudiation of the song, Being For The Benefit Of Mr. Kite! is a real tonic: an invitation to the circus enhanced by a sinuous melody, some snappy cymbal work and a committed fairground barker vocal. The lyrics might have been a knock-off — taken from an 1843 poster that Lennon found while filming the Penny Lane/Strawberry Fields promo films — but the rhythm section is topnotch and for once the singer sounds as though he's having fun.

And yet there is, as ever on this album, an impression of hallucinatory distance. The verses are

Continues on page 78



Cover versions: shooting the iconic album sleeve, March 30, 1967 (clockwise from this page) Fabs, in *Pepper* finery, and friends; (from left) Mal Evans, George, Neil Aspinall, Paul, Michael Cooper discuss the shot; Lenny Bruce, cut out and tinted; boxer boxed – Sonny Liston's waxwork head from Madame Tussaud's; setting up the shot, Nigel Hartnup (front left) in black, next to, and just taller than, Liston.

“SHIFT KARL MARX TO THE LEFT A BIT!”

One of the unsung heroes of the *SGT. PEPPER* sleeve shot, **NIGEL HARTNUP** tells of ink-wash, “fish fries” and leaving Marlene Dietrich in the street.

STANDING ON A RICKETY stool, which was on a table, my head was jammed sideways into the corner of the wall and the ceiling as I concentrated on the inverted image in the back of a 5x4 Sinar technical camera at full stretch on its tripod. The traditional photographer's black cloth was not needed over my head, as the walls and ceiling of the whole studio were painted matt black. In front of me, at the far end of the studio was a scene that was to become world famous. We had been working on it solidly for a fortnight, which was a long time for any photograph, never mind a 'mere' record album cover.

I was an assistant photographer to Michael Cooper, for his company, MC Productions Ltd, along with my friend, Trevor Sutton and a junior assistant, Andrew Boulton. Trevor and I had studied photography together at Medway College Of Art and we teamed up once again at Vogue Studios, in Hanover Square, as assistants to the fashion photographers who were contracted with them. Michael Cooper worked there and when he left in 1965 to set up his own studio he asked us to work for him and be his assistants for the princely sum of £12.10 shillings a week. As we were only getting £10 at Vogue, we both agreed.

Michael was short, long-haired and wildly dressed in tight trousers, colourful shirts, long scarves and bright jackets. He was financed by the art gallery owner, Robert Fraser, who was friendly with top artists and musicians and a highly influential figure in the '60s art and music scene. It was in Fraser's apartment in Mayfair that the *Sgt. Pepper* cover was conceived from an idea by Paul McCartney and developed by the artist Peter Blake. The photograph was to be of a band on a lawn, behind the name of The Beatles made with flowers, just as the public parks often did in those days. The band was to be called 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' and would be the alter ego of The Beatles. Behind the band would be an audience of people The Beatles respected and admired and was to include waxworks of The Beatles themselves watching their other selves. The cover art grew from there. Peter Blake drew a design and three of the Beatles wrote a list of names. Ringo said that anything the others said was fine with him. Peter, Michael and Robert also added people. Michael then contacted gardeners and ordered the wooden frame for the flowers.

THIS LIST OF NAMES came to us at the studio and when Michael Cooper flew to New York to research the Rolling Stones cover for *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, we got down to finding suitable photographs of everyone that had been suggested. This wasn't easy. We mostly used specialised photo libraries such as the BBC Radio Times Hulton Picture Library, but sometimes we had to source directly from friends or family. John arranged for Stuart Sutcliffe's photo to come by special delivery from his parents. The Liverpool football player Albert Stubbins came by post from LFC.

As they arrived, we photographed the head shots and enlarged them to life size on 20x16 paper and sent them off to be professionally mounted on hardboard. Some of the characters were very beautiful full-length figures, such as Marlene Dietrich and Tom Mix, so we decided to get a photo lab to print and mount them full size as we didn't have such equipment in Chelsea Manor Studios. We then hired a carpenter to come with his jigsaw and carefully cut them out. My biggest contribution came next.

My dad had always loved photography and when he was younger, he coloured many of his favourite hand-printed black-and-whites with photographic dyes and he taught me how to tint photos this way. It's not easy. You have to be patient, yet fast, and put on a layer of diluted dye, then wipe it off, then another, wipe it off, then another, until you get the subtle result required. It's tedious work that needs patience and care. I tried to teach the others how to do it, but one person was a disaster, and wasn't allowed to do a second one. Just look at Aldous Huxley! I was most proud of Marlene Dietrich, H. G. Wells, W. C. Fields, Max Miller and Carl Jung. I did lots of others too, and I can proudly boast that the best ones were mine, except for Tom Mix, which Trevor did. Peter Blake's wife Jann Howarth did Tyrone Power and Oliver Hardy – perhaps a couple more.

The problems started when the frame arrived for the garden. Trevor and I were horrified to see the size, as it was far too big for the studio. The idea had been for the garden to be surrounded by grass, then a gap for the band to stand in, and behind that would be the crowd. Some depth was essential to give a more realistic feel to the shot. Now, with such a large garden, that was not possible, as it had to be farther away from the



camera and the final effect would be flat, which was how it turned out.

We suggested to Michael our plan to reflect light from a false ceiling, but he said that he wanted to use his signature lighting of 'fish fry' (a large rectangular box with a flash unit inside and a white plastic sheet that made the effect less harsh) and strip lights, and wouldn't listen to our technical advice that it wouldn't cover such a large set. So we put it all together, the gardeners cut the heads off the hyacinths and constructed the garden and only then did Michael realise that the lighting he'd planned wouldn't work. So, with a studio full of people and the set almost complete, he announced that we had to construct a false ceiling and bounce the light off that. We couldn't believe it! This would have been much easier to do when we suggested it in the first place and now we had to pretend it was his idea and go through the difficult process of building it all, with the flower garden underneath. I was furious, but just had to quietly get on with it.

Then we had to put the camera as far away and as high as possible, which meant putting the tripod on a table and extend it to full stretch, which meant that I had to be the one who managed the camera, as I'm 6'2" tall. So my head was squashed into the corner between wall and ceiling as I tried to yell instructions to Trevor and Andy where and how things in the set should be arranged. A particular problem was the reflections from the photographs of the heads. "Tilt Bob Dylan forward a bit. Yes. Now push Mae West's right shoulder back – not that much – Yes. Now, shift Karl Marx to the

wondered why I was amused. It was bizarre.

Meanwhile, soul music throbbed constantly in the studio, headed by Otis Redding, Wilson Pickett, Booker T. And The M.G.'s and many albums that were unavailable in England. Few people stood still. Everybody was moving some part of their body with the beat. The joint was jumping, as they say.

IT WAS NOT JUST THE photographic crew and The Beatles there. There were two people from Madame Tussauds who had arrived earlier in the day with all the waxworks. I was particularly amused by Sonny Liston, who arrived without his head, which came separately, in a box, with lots of padding. It was very realistic and

"WHEN SONNY LISTON WAS ASSEMBLED, I WAS DELIGHTED TO DISCOVER THAT HE WAS SMALLER THAN ME."

left a bit!" I suddenly realised what I'd said and had to laugh, but nobody else spotted it and

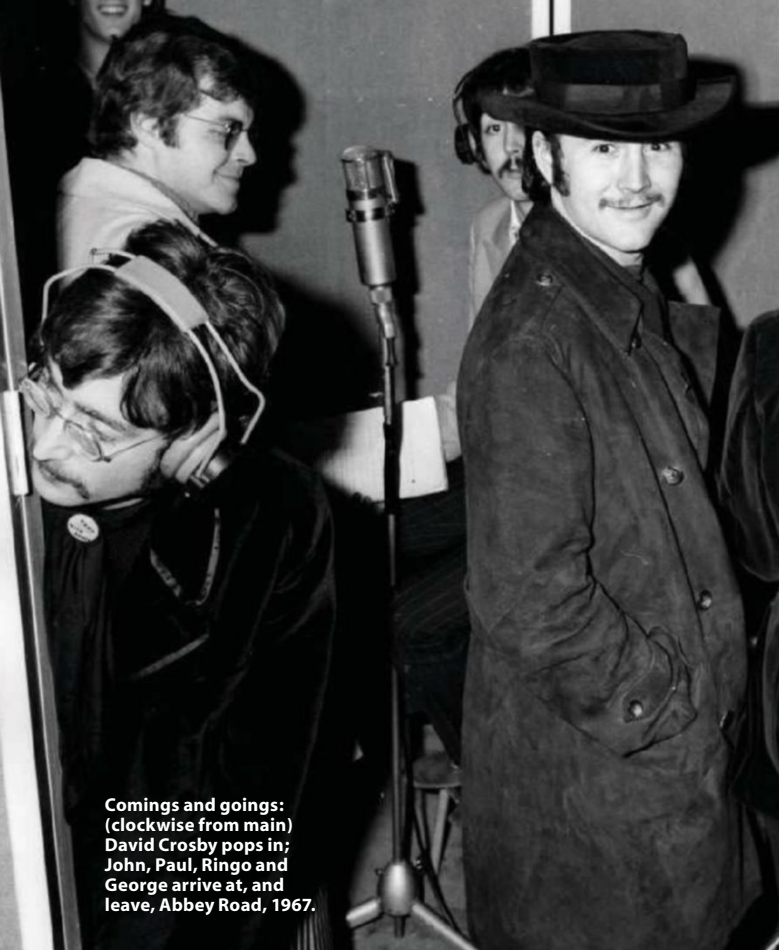
sinister and I remember taking a photograph of the bizarre boxed head. When he was assembled, I was delighted to discover that he was smaller than me, and I had Trevor take a photo to prove it. We were very grateful for the waxworks, but had to be very careful with them, as they are very valuable. We weren't allowed to handle them.

Another problem arose at this time. Communication between me, on the camera, and Trevor and Andy on the set was crucial, but there were so many people in the studio that I could not be heard. Also, so many people were smoking that the atmosphere was thickening and threatening the air quality. I have to say that it was not just tobacco, but lots of weed was being passed around. The three of us didn't partake until it was all finished, as we had serious work to do. Eventually, I just had to throw everybody out while we put the delicate finishing touches to the set. When they were allowed to return, they were not permitted to smoke, at least not in the studio!

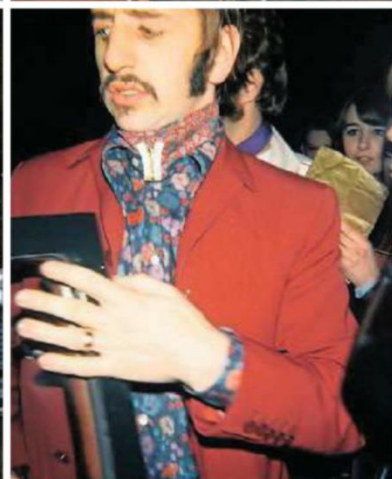
When the time arrived to take the photos, Michael stood in front of the table and directed The Beatles and told me when to press the trigger. So it was actually me who took the photographs. It was normal at the time for the assistant to be on the camera when dealing with large-format, technical cameras and it certainly doesn't mean I claim them as mine. I just pressed the shutter.

We finished late in the evening, but one of the best restaurants in London, Alvaro's, was just along the King's Road and stayed open for us. I was very proud of Marlene, so I walked along to the meal with her tucked under my arm.

When I got there, it didn't seem appropriate to take her inside, so I propped her up by the doorway on the street until we'd finished eating! This figure was to resell in 2003 for £86,000. Goodness only knows what it's worth now – and I'd left her in the street!



Comings and goings:
(clockwise from main)
David Crosby pops in;
John, Paul, Ringo and
George arrive at, and
leave, Abbey Road, 1967.



Continued from page 75

broken up by wild evocations of gravity-defying feats – an auditory suspension of disbelief achieved by George Martin’s inspired translation of a Lennon desire “to smell the sawdust on the floor”: he instructed engineer Geoff Emerick to cut up taped organ and calliope sounds, let the pieces fall and then splice them back together. The result was both airy and disorienting.

As Derek Taylor once observed, Lennon had “a good sense of memorabilia”. Using a physical artefact as a springboard, Mr. Kite promotes the album’s theme of nostalgia at the same time as, in the best spirit of pop, it takes the listener there. Back in the mid-19th century, before television, radio and film, the circus was an extraordinary release from everyday life, and this song recaptures that feeling of other-worldly wonder.

12-piece string section of violins and cellos, set to the modal dial, swoop in and out of the oscillating drones. The mood is patient and meditative, fitting a lyric that is both didactic and profound.

Harrison begins in an everyday conversation before criticising “the people who hide behind the wall of illusion”. We’re talking Maya here: the Hindu concept that in one definition describes a “magic show, an illusion where things appear to be present but are not what they seem”. As a metaphor for the irreality of The Beatles’ life, that’s hard to beat, but Harrison pushes it further into a savage critique of Western materialism: “the people who gain the world and lose their soul”.

Poised between *With A Little Help From My Friends* and *A Day In The Life*, *Within You Without You* is the album’s third major statement. With the detachment that is part of the Indian religious tradition, Harrison is talking about life as a whole. How do you want to be remembered when you die? Because you will die. And how you live is up

to you. The only solution is spiritual discipline: the practised ability to see beyond yourself, beyond the traps of materialism and the ego; then you might find “peace of mind”.

Harrison was always the bluntest of the main three Beatles composers and he is not afraid to point the finger: “Are you one of them?” Yet his saturnine demeanour is leavened by his belief that “with our love we could save the world” – a message repeated by The Beatles’ next single, *All You Need Is Love*. The mocking laughter that briefly enters right at the end is unnecessary, but makes the point that the serious ideas that he proposes are likely to be met with derision.

And this reading of Maya could equally apply to *Sgt. Pepper* as a whole: the most obviously magical of all Beatles shows, with all its smoke and mirrors, where things are definitely not what they seem.

SIDE 2

8: WITHIN YOU WITHOUT YOU

The Second Sermon: On What Is Real

GEORGE HARRISON’S sole composition more than justifies its pole, side-opening position with a perfect integration of music, text and feeling. Like *She’s Leaving Home*, it features no Beatle instrumentation: instead, several Indian musicians set up a mid-paced raga while a

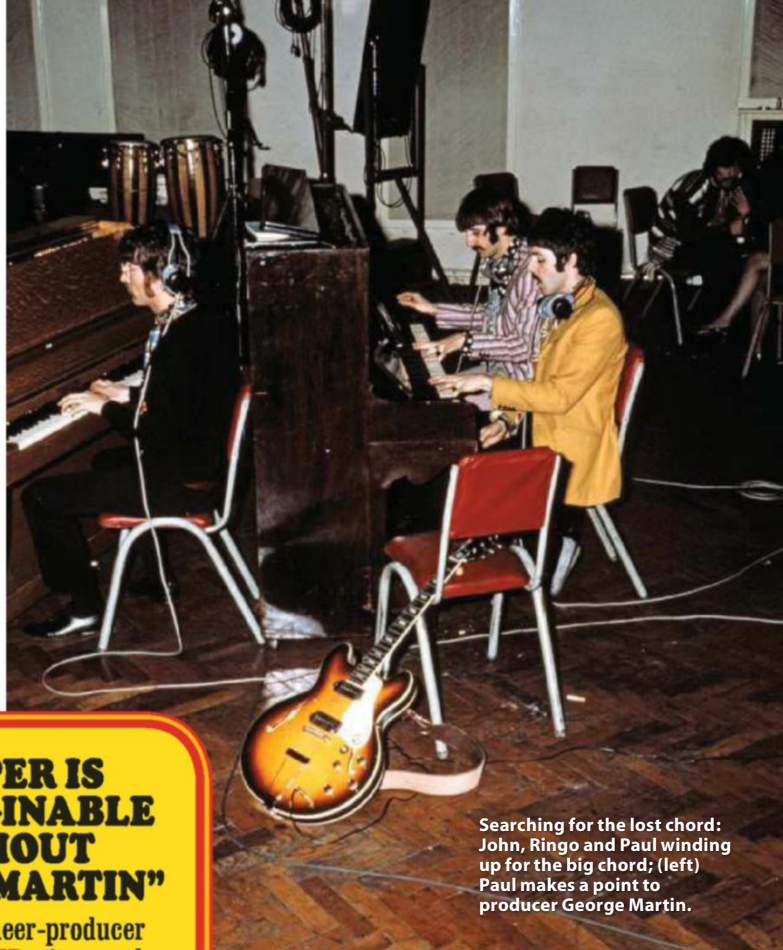
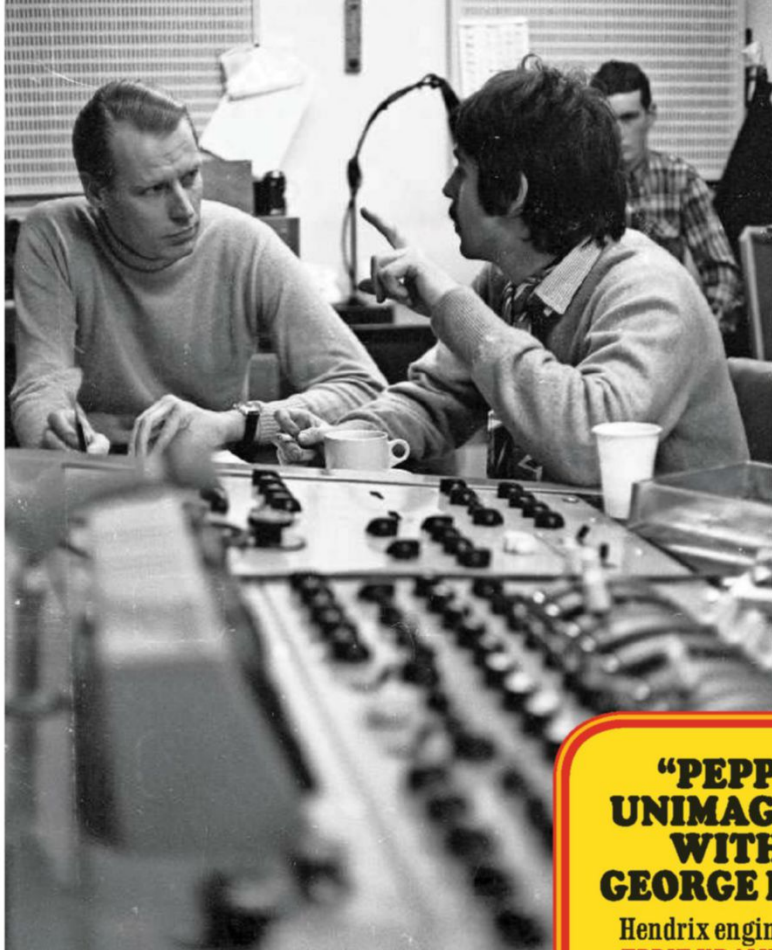
Pepper pieces: (left to right) George’s Hindu inspiration; traffic temptress; Cribbins covers; tame TV and radio.



9: WHEN I’M SIXTY-FOUR

An Invitation And A Question

A PROJECTION INTO THE FUTURE couched in past styles, *When I’m Sixty-Four* is the album’s other main gesture of cross-generational amnesty: sung by a young man imagining himself 40 years later. The mode is light music hall and McCartney’s voice is precisely enunciated and sped up high, prefiguring *White Album* tracks like *Honey Pie*. The



Searching for the lost chord: John, Ringo and Paul winding up for the big chord; (left) Paul makes a point to producer George Martin.

"PEPPER IS UNIMAGINABLE WITHOUT GEORGE MARTIN"

Hendrix engineer-producer **EDDIE KRAMER** witnessed Jimi's famed *Pepper* tribute.



I was upstairs at the Saville Theatre [London, June 4, 1967], in the dressing room with Jimi, Mitch [Mitchell] and Noel [Redding]. Jimi had a little Philips record player that he was playing a copy of *Sgt. Pepper* on. I'm not sure if it was an advanced copy or if he'd just bought it. I just remember the disc was bigger than the actual record layer.

Jimi was playing them the opening song. Noel and Mitch were huddled around him and he was running through the chords. This is literally five minutes before they went on. Then they ran downstairs and jumped on-stage and opened with *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and if you've heard the tapes you'll know it was stunning.

Well, George [Harrison] and Paul [McCartney] are in the audience and their jaws fall to the floor. Paul says that George turned to him and said, "We've got to go back to the studio and re-do the fucking guitars!"

But everyone in the business had the same response to *Sgt. Pepper*. It was, "Holy shit – the game has just changed." The integration of the orchestral parts was immense. Coming from a classical background myself I really revered George Martin's touch. *Pepper* is unimaginable without George Martin.

And the way it was presented as a piece of music, beautifully joined together. And the variety – the changing moods and rhythms. Being a young engineer, coming up through the ranks at Olympic, it was a revelation. And shortly after, working with The Beatles on *All You Need Is Love* and *Baby You're A Rich Man*, was another. They were just so damned efficient. The workmanship and quality and the sonic surprises – they brought all that with them.

Sgt. Pepper opened up the bloody floodgates. People weren't afraid to take pop music seriously after that.

sentiments are tenderly expressed and the details carefully mundane, with a touch of humour in the unlikely grandkids "Vera Chuck and Dave" and the cod-bureaucratic "Give me your answer, fill in a form...".

As an adult-pleasing move, this breezy number is an important part of *Sgt. Pepper's* broad appeal but, apart from Lennon and Harrison's raga harmonies on lines like "you'll be older too", there is nothing musically to place it in 1967. This impression was enhanced by quick cover versions by early 1960s stars like Bernard Cribbins and Kenny Ball & His Jazzmen. Time has lent depth and poignancy to this apparently straightforward ditty.

10: LOVELY RITA

A Modest Proposal

OCCASIONALLY DISMISSED AS filler, *Lovely Rita* provides a welcome moment of looseness in a tightly scripted 40 or so minutes. The scenario is again mundane – Beatle gets a parking ticket – but in the spirit of the time he responds not with anger but with love and generosity. Celebrating that most maligned public servant, McCartney plays it flirty and jokey but the lyric has some nice switches ("got the bill and Rita paid it") and the backing vocals include a bit of ska "chik-a-chik" among the horizontal raga lines.

Although the instrumentation is straightforward, the production is dense and heavily varispeeded, making *Rita* one of the most psychedelic-sounding songs on the record. It feels like The Beatles are having

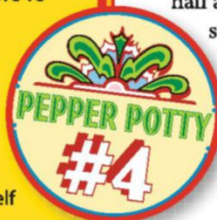
fun, an impression enhanced by the final 30 seconds where, after McCartney's last line, the group keeps up the piano-led rhythm with a variety of improvised vocal sounds. Suddenly, the tension is released, and it's such a moment of relief.

11: GOOD MORNING GOOD MORNING

A Cynic's Observation

BEGINNING WITH FOUR LINES that contain the word 'nothing', *Good Morning Good Morning* is anything but – despite its origin in a half-heard advert. It features its author in splenetic mode, forcing the listener to confront the emptiness of everyday life: "Everything is closed it's like a ruin/Everyone you see is half asleep." A furious Lennon is something to behold, and his blasts against naff TV shows, deserted town centres and the horror of the daily work routine are highly entertaining – albeit redolent of stoner alienation.

The track is the dirtiest-sounding on the whole album, with pounding beats, a vicious solo from McCartney and a compressed and spiky brass section from old Beatle compatriots Sounds Incorporated. The overall effect verges on resentment at having to write a song when the inspiration is not there ("I've got nothing to say/But it's OK"), but Lennon's bilious attack works as a sarcastic corrective on an album so rooted in the mundane. It ends, famously, with a sequence of animal sounds that provides the album's most inspired segue... ➤



PIANO MAGIC



Coats of many colours: Dudley Edwards applies the finishing touches to Macca's Magic Piano; (below) Ringo's mural.



Paul McCartney wrote *Getting Better*, Sgt. Pepper's *Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Fixing A Hole* on his 'Magic Piano'. In an extract from a new book, Sgt. Pepper At 50, **DUDLEY EDWARDS recounts how he provided its inspirational paintjob.**

DOUGLAS BINDER and I began designing Paul's 'Magic Piano' in September 1966 and completed it in October of that year. When it came to choosing motifs and designs, we wanted something that exuded joy, and when I considered what kind of imagery epitomised that for me, I was taken back to my early days of rock'n'roll, with teddy boys bopping and jiving to Little Richard around a fairground waltzer. I figured an intrinsic part of that package was fairground imagery; this was a form of folk art worth proliferating, but in a new way.

Our designs comprised a synthesis of the following: a love of basic geometry, elements of art deco, primitive folk art, and sophisticated colour combinations. At that time we chose a look that was smooth and polished (almost mechanical), with hard-edge lines and smooth gradation. This required the painterly skills that Doug and I learned at art college, where in those days part of the curriculum involved the acquisition of heraldry and coach-painting techniques.

When Douglas and I went our separate ways, Paul invited me to come and live with him while I painted a mural for the interior of his house. I recollect that when I first arrived at Paul's I had to run the gauntlet of screaming girls who seemed to congregate outside on a permanent basis. Paul couldn't have been more welcoming or more generous; when I mentioned that I only had the clothes I was wearing, he opened his wardrobe and said, "Help yourself."

Paul included me in all his social and business activities, so it became difficult to find time for working on the mural. As he was the only Beatle

"WHEN I MENTIONED I ONLY HAD THE CLOTHES I WAS WEARING, PAUL OPENED HIS WARDROBE AND SAID, 'HELP YOURSELF.'"

based in central London at the time, his house had many cultural visitors. I recall evenings with Mick Jagger and Prince Stanislaus Klossowski de Rola [aka Prince Stash], who stayed for a number of weeks and taught both Paul and me the alchemical significance of Hieronymus Bosch. One evening I was there with Paul's friend Ray Anderson when Micky Dolenz of The Monkees arrived. Later, he would recall, "Paul took us into his music room and showed us around. It has a piano painted by Dudley. That piano is the freakiest thing you've ever seen. It's lavender, gold, blue, orange – everything you could imagine – it's got millions of colours."

John Lennon called around and Paul asked if I minded if he and John retired to his music studio to do some work on a number. Eventually they emerged to play me the first rendition of *Getting Better* – I guess they wanted a layman's opinion.

Some nights we would go down to Abbey Road, where I witnessed many tracks being laid for Sgt. Pepper. On occasion, Paul's particular skills wouldn't require the others' attendance, for example the French horn sequence in the title track, where around 12 classical musicians

assembled in two rows facing Paul with the baton. The first rendition sounded perfect to my untrained ear,

but no, Paul said the second musician from the left was slightly out. The player nodded in agreement. This went on, take after take, Paul correcting one player then another until they got it right.

One morning on the way back from the studio, a policeman pulled us over. Paul seemed nervous. He got out of the car to speak, and I could hear the policeman say, "Sorry sir, I didn't realise it was you."

Paul later explained that it

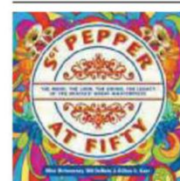
could go both ways: they'd either treat him like royalty or throw the book at him.

When the first complimentary copies of Sgt. Pepper were sent out, Paul would share some of the initial responses with me, including a letter from [Karlheinz] Stockhausen, congratulating him on *A Day In The Life*.

Some evenings we would visit various nightclubs around London, and it was at one of these, the Bag O' Nails, that Paul first met Linda, who would later recall riding home in a Mini with Lulu and me, and how she had been impressed to see Paul's Magrittes.

Paul had some of the best Magrittes I'd ever seen; one in particular sticks in my memory. It depicts a fish in a prison cell, pining for the sea, which can be seen in the distance, through the barred cell window.

It was through studying these paintings, coupled with an awakened interest in spirituality care of Stash, that my work began to take on a different turn – one I expressed in my next mural, to be painted on the wall of Ringo's game room in Weybridge.



Extracted from *Sgt. Pepper At 50: The Mood, The Look, The Sound, The Legacy Of The Beatles' Great Masterpiece*, by Bill DeMain, Mike McInerney, and Gillian G. Gaar, out now on Omnibus Press.

12: SGT. PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND (REPRISE)

A Slight Return

...FROM A CHICKEN'S CLUCK TO the plucking of George Harrison's guitar, before a brisk "one two three four" count-in from McCartney resolves into a simple, accelerated version of the overture with only two short verses and more overdubbed applause. It sounds as though it was recorded live: The Beatles play with enthusiasm and excitement for the third uptempo tune in a row.

The accepted version is that the return of Sgt. Pepper was necessary to make the pseudonymous band concept clearer, but it's arguably superfluous. The album is thematically coherent without it, being a series of disquisitions on origins (childhood, adolescence, Liverpool), distance (fame, money, drugs), the nature of time and space (drugs, spirituality), and indeed the questionable nature of 'reality' as constructed.

Nevertheless, the idea of Sgt. Pepper is crucial to the album's success: like the gaudy, detail-dense sleeve, it provided perfect packaging for a sequence of songs that – in contrast to subsequent Summer of Love clichés – cut deeper to the bone than the mass market might otherwise have tolerated. It's the sugaring of the pill, a means to dazzle and thus avoid too close a scrutiny of what the group were up to (withdrawal, drugs, individuation) and who they were. After years in the harsh light, they were beginning to slip into the shadows.

13: A DAY IN THE LIFE

The End

ALTHOUGH RECORDED EARLY IN the sessions, there could only ever be one placement for this extraordinary song. It begins with a brief piano fanfare, before Lennon comes in with another conversational opening, "I read the news today, oh boy." The use of colloquial speech and everyday scenarios to construct an alternative world is one of the deep pleasures of this record. In this, Lennon's total immersion in the mass media gives his evocation of the everyday extra immediacy.

A Day In The Life takes the theme of mundanity and pushes it as far as it could possibly go in 1967. Lennon's verses relate incidents from his and the group's recent history: the death of friend Tara Browne, the filming of *How I Won The War*, a Daily Mail news story. In the middle of a profoundly – and deliberately – unsettling sound picture, Lennon rolls his tongue around the phrase Blackburn, Lancashire in the broadest of accents.

This collage of two different songs couldn't be more illustrative of the difference between The Beatles' two principal writers. McCartney is more rooted in normality, yet his evocation of the daily grind shows that transformation is possible in the most unlikely place: the top deck of a bus. It's noticeable that the shift of mood and being is effected by a smoke – this is the album's one free and frank drug song. But when Lennon states "I'd love to turn you on", his invitation does not convey euphoria but a disturbing blankness.

In the same way, the two powerful orchestral swells are more ominous than ecstatic. The affectlessness evoked by Lennon's verses and vocal build up into something more than everyday alienation or drugged distance: as he sings "a crowd of people turned away" or the final "I'd love to turn you on" the feeling is unutterably remote and sad. The concluding verse concerns holes, and this is the yawning vacancy at the heart of *Sgt. Pepper's*

"IT WAS THE REAL DAWN OF THE ALBUM"

How Sgt. Pepper made The Pretty Things' PHIL MAY take his clothes off.



I was in a London night club with Lennon and Harrison, everyone very stoned. It was a lock-in. The way I remember it, it was a celebration of sorts for them finishing *Sgt. Pepper*. Lennon was flying. We all were.

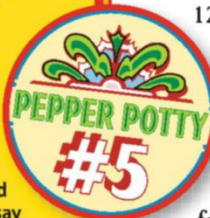
They sent Neil [Aspinall] or Mal [Evans] back to Abbey Road and came back with a quarter-inch of the album and put it through the system at this club. Of course, it was unbelievable. I mean, we were very stoned, but even so.

Now back in those days I would paint my own clothes. Get a white linen jacket and use acrylic paints – put my own designs on there. And I was so overwhelmed that I took my bloody jacket off and gave it to George in exchange for some dodgy shell necklace and a neckerchief.

The Pretty Things were still negotiating to get into Abbey Road. But Pepper confirmed every reason we had for signing to EMI, even though the money was absolute crap. We just wanted to get inside that studio. I always say that we didn't sign to EMI; we signed to Abbey Road... and Norman Smith [Beatles engineer and, later, Pink Floyd/Pretty Things producer].

Pepper was a declaration that all bets were off. You might have had an idea of what a band is, but *Pepper* announced that a band can be anything. It was also the real dawn of the album. The gatefold, the imagery, the storyline – you could take all that into someone's front room along with the music. It was tactile, like a book.

Years later I opened a drawer and came across the necklace George gave me and thought, Hmmm, not such a great exchange...



Dear Sir Joseph,

"A Day in the Life"

I never thought the day would come when we would have to put a ban on an EMI record, but sadly, that is what has happened over this track. We have listened to it over and over again with great care, and we cannot avoid coming to the conclusion that the words "I'd love to turn you on", followed by that mounting montage of sound, could have a rather sinister meaning.

The recording may have been made in innocence and good faith, but we must take account of the interpretation that any young people would inevitably put upon it. "Turned on" is a phrase which can be used in many different circumstances, but it is currently much in vogue in the jargon of the drug-addicts. We do not feel that we can take the responsibility of appearing to favour or encourage these unfortunate habits, and that is why we shall not be playing the recording in any of our programmes, Radio or Television.

I expect we shall meet with some embarrassment over this decision, which has already been noted by the Press. We will do our best not to appear to be criticising your people, but as you will realise, we do find ourselves in a very difficult position. I thought you would like to know why we have, most reluctantly, taken this decision.

Kindest regards,

Yours ever,

FRANK GILLARD

(Frank Gillard)

Director of Sound Broadcasting

Sir Joseph Lockwood, Chairman,
"The Beatles" House,
20 Manchester House,
London, W.1.

The Beeb bans A Day In Life: "I expect we shall meet with some embarrassment over this decision..."

colour, artifice and life: a veil has been torn in the perception of everyday life, but what is left is total emptiness.

The justly famous arrangement and the crashing final chord serve to obscure this devastating message. A genuine collage between two different McCartney and Lennon songs, *A Day In The Life* is the toughest mass market product ever to be consumed by millions. That last chord remained an ending until 1977, when The Residents used it to begin their inspired aural montage *Beyond The Valley Of A Day In The Life* – the very start of what in a few years would become the sampling era.

13½: THE RUN-OUT

The Epilogue

BUT, OF COURSE, IT WAS NOT quite over. In the spirit of making the album a proper *Gesamkunstwerke* – a total artwork as opposed to a simulation of a 'live show' – The Beatles added a final perceptual touch. Pressed without rills – the gaps between tracks – in order to accentuate the unitary nature of the

12-inch artefact, the original UK vinyl had one last trick up its sleeve: a whistle pitched at 15kHz, that only a dog could hear, and this strange, distorted run-out groove. A 10-second snippet from what Barry Miles recalls as nine hours of fooling about, it features the high pitched voice of an unknown Beatle(s), reversed into a pattern of words that sounds like "never to see any other way". Looped by the permanent locked groove, this could in theory run into infinity, while the actual entry point depended on the pressing. This early example of turntablism initiated a whole raft of fan theories (play it backwards and you can hear "we all be magic supermen", for instance) while adding value to this hermetically sealed package. It was not included on the first US pressing.

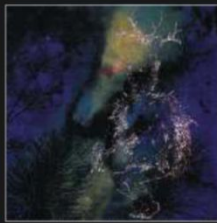


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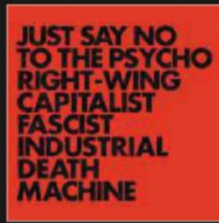
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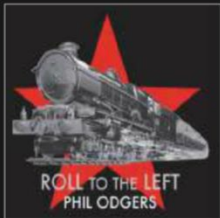
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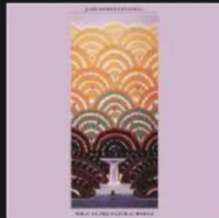
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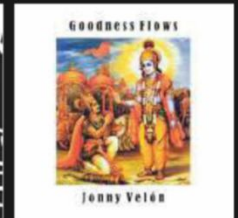
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PARADISE OF BACHELORS LP / CD



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COCO HAMES
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RAYS
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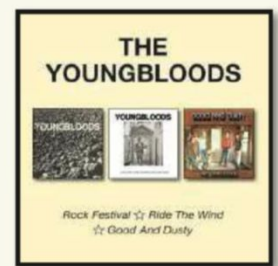
IAN MATTHEWS
Valley Hi/
Some Days You Eat The Bear...
And Some Days The Bear Eats You
BGOCD1272



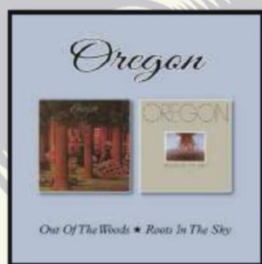
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Like It Is / Honey-Drippin' Blues
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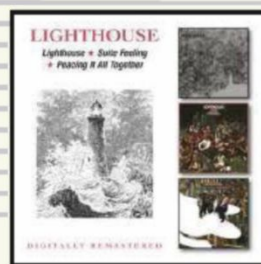
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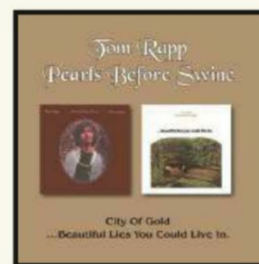
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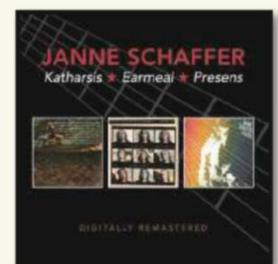
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MOJO

YOUR GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S BEST MUSIC. EDITED BY **JENNY BULLEY**

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"This Heat drummer Hayward's side-long work of depthless lurking dread, entitled Thames Water Authority."

ANDREW MALE, GOES DEEP UNDERGROUND, ALBUMS, PAGE 89

RATINGS & FORMATS

Your guide to the month's best music is now even more definitive with our handy format guide. **CD** COMPACT DISC **DL** DOWNLOAD **ST** STREAMING **LP** VINYL **MC** CASSETTE **DVD** DIGITAL VIDEO DISC **C** IN CINEMAS **BR** BLU-RAY

★★★★★ **MOJO CLASSIC** ★★★★★ **EXCELLENT** ★★★ **GOOD** ★★ **DISAPPOINTING** ★ **BEST AVOIDED** ☆ **DEPLORABLE**

FILTER



Soft power

After 40 years, Weller is still the suburban outsider. Now, in a blend of rock, jazz and soul, is his hippy message of love and peace Pat Gilbert. Illustration by Katie Edwards.

Paul Weller



A Kind Revolution

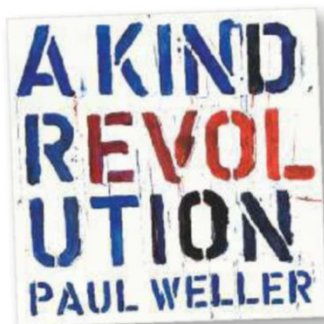
PARLOPHONE. CD/DL/LP

Unbelievable perhaps to some who've lived through it all, it was 40 years ago this May that Paul Weller debuted with The Jam's *In The City*, his sullen teenage features glaring out from the sleeve dressed in a black Burton suit. The idea back then that the bolshie 19-year-old builder's son would endure as one of the UK's most prolific and successful music icons would have had a Leicester City-winning-the-league implausibility about it. Sheer grit and a boundless appetite for self-improvement have sustained Weller, via The Jam, Style Council and 25 years of solo recordings, as an extraordinarily fertile artist. But how his creative ambitions have translated with his 'audience' has always been the rub. And *A Kind Revolution*'s space-age, deep soul grooves, electronica punk, waltzing chanson and jazzy, *Aladdin Sane* Bowie-isms will offer another interesting and unexpected twist to the story.

The latest phase in Weller's career can be traced back to 2008, when *22 Dreams*' eclectic mix of folk, rock, psychedelia and – reaching out to hitherto *verboden* realms – electronic music were blended into a double album of supreme confidence and open-mindedness. After 2010's angry *Wake Up The Nation*, his last two albums, 2012's *Sonik Kicks* and 2015's *Saturns Pattern*, took the thirst for experimentation ever further: the former a metallic post-punk corker with dancehall bass and cut'n'paste studio techniques, the latter an oft-challenging adventure into cosmic soundscapes and genre-bending strangeness.

Weller's vision for *A Kind Revolution* was to further explore the territory mapped out by *Saturns Pattern*'s rich sonic interrogations but that clearly isn't where the LP has ended up. Instead, there's an old-fashioned warmth that suffuses its many stylistic twists, and which despite its electronic inflections and polished production sounds like a combo of time-served musicians relishing the mash up of blues, jazz, rock and folk.

Such is its diversity that no one track sums up the whole, though when the needle hits the grooves for the opener *Woo Sé Mama* you immediately get a whiff of *A Kind Revolution*'s bullish intent, the track channelling Peacock Suit from *Heavy Soul*'s preening Weller-rock vibrations, with joyous whooping backing vocals courtesy of '60s soul legends P.P. Arnold and Madeline Bell. Straight after comes the equally vibrant *Nova*, beginning with a plaintive, chugging verse before, aided by the youthful vim



KEY TRACKS

- *Woo Sé Mama*
- *The Cranes Are Back*
- *One Tear*

of The Strypes' guitarist Josh McClorey, it explodes into a crunch-chord jubilee embellished by blooping synths that summon the notion of an interplanetary new wave mission to another galaxy.

No old-school Weller stylist could bemoan this impressive opening salvo, but the heart of this album lies not in these stirring introductory outbursts but in the suite of soulful tunes that follow. At the core of these is the extraordinary *The Cranes Are Back*, a declarative piano ballad that salutes the beginning of a new dawn, where the return of these sacred birds – and, punningly, the machines used in building construction – symbolise

hope and rejuvenation. If one thought that Weller had, in four decades and several hundred songs, exhausted every chord change available, then the lush, uplifting glide into the song's bridge suggests otherwise, hinting at an admiration for the hymnal moods of contemporary jazz magus Kamasi Washington's *The Epic*, as well as, the careworn spirituality of Coltrane and Donald Byrd.

Of the other mid-album songs – among them the Memphis tones of *Long Long Road* and funky, keening *She Moves With The Fayre* (with trumpet and middle-eight vocal by Robert Wyatt) – it's *One Tear* that stands out as the Big Statement here: featuring an intertwined vocal from Boy George, whom Weller has rated since their parallel '80s forays into blue-eyed soul, its undulating deep house groove and dubstep bass underpin a lyric decrying a planet whose moral compass has gone awry. In this world, it's as if only music can heal humanity's ills; or at least salve them.

If this sounds like heavy, globally-minded stuff, then two other key tracks locate the record in far more personal space. *Hopper*, a delightful ode to the work of artist Edward Hopper, all swinging brass and loose jazzy feel, is an unexpected delight, while the New York theme is further explored in the song of the same name, a romantic story of a "crystal kiss" evolving into a fever dream of instrumental improv and merry-go-round organ.

It's musical details like that exquisite Hammond part, coaxed by Weller sidekick Andy Crofts, that lend *A Kind Revolution* its magical, homely allure; indeed, recorded in Weller's own Black Barn studio in rural Surrey, there's a strong sense of the familial and the spiritual conjoined in the performances, with drummer Ben Gordelier enjoying letting rip on the fills that grace *Satellite Kid*, a blues about a proud immigrant that doubles as a comment on the singer's own self-image as the eternal suburban outsider, plus appearances from old cohorts Steve Cradock and Steve Pilgrim, and even Paul's wife Hannah providing woozy *Star Trek* backing vocals on *The Cranes Are Back*.

The album – just 10 tracks in all – finishes with *The Impossible Idea*, a waltzing, stagey number that seems to borrow its melody from Mary Poppins' *Let's Go Fly A Kite*, and which leaves the listener on a joyous high, reaching for the better place that *A Kind Revolution* suggests the human race deserves. It's a fitting finale to an album that ranks among his finest work, not just for its strident messages of hope, but also for simply possessing such a high quotient of unimpeachable songs.

A Kind Revolution, then, that we should embrace.



BACK STORY: SOCK IT TO 'EM

• *A Kind Revolution* appears just weeks after another Paul Weller LP, a soundtrack – his first – to actor Johnny Harris's boxing movie *Jawbone*. "I was working on the two albums simultaneously but they were separate things. The long piece of music on *Jawbone* [Jimmy/Blackout] I've had for about four years now. Some stuff I did to picture and *The Ballad Of Jimmy McCabe* was written specially for the film. I was busy last year, as I also co-produced the Stone Foundation's record [*Street Rituals*] and helped produce Steve Ellis's next record. And I've already almost got another album together..."

"A CRUNCH-CHORD JUBILEE WITH BLOOPING SYNTHS THAT SUMMONS AN INTER-PLANETARY NEW WAVE MISSION TO ANOTHER GALAXY."

PAUL TALKS WELLER ON BOY GEORGE'S VOICE, SPEAKING UP FOR PEACE AND REBUILDING THE HUMAN SPIRIT.



"It's good to bring new people in": Paul Weller keeps his eyes peeled.



"I see the album as very uplifting."

Paul Weller talks to Pat Gilbert.

Did you go into this album resolving to do something different again?

"Not really. A couple of songs were done before [last album] *Saturns Pattern* came out, but it was mostly written last year. I don't mean this in any arrogant way, but I was so pleased with the sound on *Saturns Pattern*, I wanted to pursue that a bit more. Whether I've done that I don't know... what you end up with isn't usually what you set out to do. It wrote itself after a while. It happened pretty quickly – it was done by last October."

Did you see *A Kind Revolution* as a statement about the world today? The album addresses big themes...

"Well, it's a statement about where I am at the moment... We need a revolution but not one that kills more people, one that means we look into ourselves a bit more. Not just as a nation but as part of the human race. Do you remember that picture of a baby girl washed up on the beach a couple of years ago? The migrant? I was thinking of putting that on the cover. I didn't know whether humanity had sunk to a new low or not, or whether we're just more aware of it. Then there's that picture of the boy sitting in the back of an ambulance in Aleppo – what kind of world can allow that to happen? We're so de-sensitised to it all."

What do you think can be done about it?

"I don't know, but there's not an international peace movement. We're fucked, really. At the moment I can't see where the hope is coming from. If you look at the world leaders, we don't have a Mandela or a Dr King or whoever speaking up for peace."

The track *The Cranes Are Back* touches on the idea that society might undergo a positive renewal.

"Yes, it's a double metaphor. In some societies the cranes returning are a sign of good fortune, and then I was also thinking about mechanical cranes, where you see people spending money and building starting again. I see the album as very uplifting as a whole."

Some guests are unexpected, like Boy George.

"He was going to sing on *Saturns Pattern* but it didn't work out. I love his voice, it sounds better than ever, really soulful. I'd like to do something with him in the future. With P.P. Arnold and Madeline Bell, they both live in Spain and both happened to be in London on the day we wanted them to do it. Young Josh McClorey from The Strypes plays on a few tracks, but the core was me, Ben [Gordelier] and Crofty [Andy Crofts]. Ben's one of the best drummers I've ever played with. I just think someone might sound good on a particular tracks and call them up. It's always good to bring new people in."



Joan Shelley

★★★★

Joan Shelley

NO QUARTER. CD/DL/LP

Best album yet from Louisville singer-songwriter, rooted, but not stuck, in folk.

Timeless is an overused word in album reviews – as if there could be any reliable indicator that new music will retain its potency even five years hence. But Joan Shelley has a trick, at least, of making time disappear, her stately clear voice a rock at which the world flings itself in vain. Folk currents – the Fairports modalities of *If The Storms Never Came*; the Nick Drake drift of *Wild Indifference* – join with folk wisdom, in the doubtful shadows of *I Got What I Wanted*, and *The Push And Pull*, where she asks not to describe (and diminish) what happens between lovers: "Don't make me make up a story/Don't make me say what this is..." Jeff Tweedy produces but does not intrude and *Where I'll Find You* – the simplest, least adorned of the lot – is one of the songs of the year so far.

Danny Eccleston

Kasabian

★★★★

For Crying Out Loud

COLUMBIA. CD/DL/LP

The jesters from Leicester grow up, a little.



Rarely tolerated on the critical high ground, these rave/rock/rap turbo-nutters first lurched into earshot circa '97, and, on an unflinching popular mandate, have dominated the twin-centred vacuum left by Britpop and big beat for the ensuing two decades. After lairy, aspiration-free beginnings in the vein of Skint Records duffers Lo-Fidelity Allstars, Kasabian have acquired musically finesse down the years, and this sixth album should ensure their ongoing indestructibility, with less niche cartoon-rave aboard, more classic-rock and baggy/disco. In the latter vein, *You're In Love With A Psycho* will doubtless imminently resound on this nation's high streets via legless choruses at closing time. Bless This Acid House, conversely, sounds like Slade. Painful slowie *Wasted* possibly refers to talismanic singer Tom Meighan's recent relationship break-up and existential meltdown, but it soon gives way to *Come Back*

Kid – vintage Kasabian invincibility on a jump-up Boxerbeat rhythm. Another big album, for crying out loud.

Andrew Perry

Dave Davies & Russ Davies

★★★★

Open Road

RED RIVER ENTERTAINMENT. CD/DL

First song-based collaboration from former Kink and his DJ/dance producer son.



Back in 2014 Dave Davies took a song-in-progress, *In The Old Days*, to brother Ray, who refused to collaborate, so he completed it with his son Russ. The album on which that appeared, *Rippin' Up Time*, was full of raw guitar crunch and nifty lead work. Those elements are again present here in places, but overall the mood is more reflective. What unites both albums is the lyrical content; Dave delving into memories to prompt ideas for songs – telescoping back to schooldays on the sparse piano and guitar shuffle of *Don't Wanna Grow Up*, and taking stock on the poignant *Forgiveness*. The father-and-son combination is satisfyingly unpredictable, with a fresh, non-rock approach to some of the rhythms and unexpected shifts in style, like the massive guitars on *King Of Diamonds*, and the breezy but bittersweet pop of *Slow Down*.

Mike Barnes

Lindsey Buckingham & Christine McVie

★★★★

Lindsey Buckingham & Christine McVie

EAST WEST. CD/DL

Fleetwood Mac's new not-quite Fleetwood Mac album.



The party line is that Stevie Nicks' solo commitments have forced Fleetwood Mac to put their next album on hold. But as the recent *Tango In The Night* reissue proved, Lindsey Buckingham and

Christine McVie were often the band's great unsung partnership. Confusingly, this duets album also includes bass guitarist John McVie and drummer Mick Fleetwood, making it essentially Fleetwood Mac, minus Nicks. McVie brings the sing-song pop (*Feel About You*, *Red Sun*) and the slightly cloying *Game Of Pretend*; Buckingham, the whispered vocals and fingernail-splitting guitar solos on *Sleeping Around The Corner* and *Love Is Here To Stay*, plus the album's best song: the nagging and melancholy *In My World*. Does it miss Stevie Nicks? Yes, just as the last Fleetwood Mac album, 2003's *Say You Will*, missed Christine McVie. But until all parties can sync their calendars, this will do nicely.

Mark Blake

Ryuichi Sakamoto

★★★★

async

MILAN. CD/DL/LP

Japanese composer's first solo LP in 8 years, after 2015 recovery from throat cancer.



Described by Ryuichi Sakamoto as "an imaginary soundtrack to an Andrei Tarkovsky film", this unfolds like a journey from the claustrophobic to the dreamlike. It begins with a possible Bach adaptation, an adagio for piano, that morphs into a sombre, processional organ work, gradually overwhelmed by the amplified sounds of the church and analogue electronic hum: an act of remembrance interrupted by the outside world. Recorded in New York, and influenced by prime numbers, chaos and asynchrony, *async* travels through prepared piano pieces, to sweeping soundtrack romanticism, naive pop electronica, pounding avant discord and minimalist digital decay. It's a work of journey and memoir, where Sakamoto's compositions are always tracked by another 'presence', whether that be rainfall, footsteps in empty museums, the spoken words of Tarkovsky and Paul Bowles, or just the buzzing of the air itself; the sounds of surrounding life collaborating with art.

Andrew Male



World is not enough

The queen of Wassoulou soul has got a (slightly) brand new bag.
By David Hutcheon.

Oumou Sangaré

★★★★★

Mogoya

NØ FØRMAT! CD/DL/LP

IN THE 1980s, African acts would turn up to record their international albums lugging the synthesizers and drum machines they used for home crowds. Ever so subtly, they'd be disabused of the notion that Europe and North America were looking for a new Peter Gabriel or Sting. "If you want to sell anything," their labels would advise, "you've got to sound more like you."

The best, and Mali's Oumou Sangaré is one of the very best, would find a way to sound rootsy while avoiding the demands of a section of their new fanbase to stick to what their grandparents did: who cares if Hammond, electric bass or Spanish guitar aren't strictly part of your tradition, call Pee Wee Ellis and Nitin Sawhney, let's see if anybody complains. The results, naturally, were impressive.

In the eight years since Sangaré's fourth album, *Seya*, a lot has changed, and with the carrot of significant sales no longer dangling in front of them, the talent can turn to the accountants and say: "Sod it, I'm going to do



exactly what I want." Or, as she puts it, somewhat disingenuously: "I've been totally in the tradition for years, so to have a look around elsewhere was a total pleasure."

Two years ago World Circuit, Sangaré's former label, released Mbongwana Star's debut; this year Real World issued Les Amazones D'Afrique – two labels with histories of breaking traditional-sounding acts now delivering raucous, electronic blasts of African punk.

"Authenticity" be damned. And it is right at this very moment that Sangaré decided to change her tune and to team up with a French label whose most notable successes have come via pairing a Malian kora player and a French cellist.

Fortunately, you have to work a little to detect the changes her music has undergone. The songs remain the same: the feminist who

made her name with declarations of disenchantment about the way women were marginalised in Mali – the property of men who could buy them for a handful of nuts – remains focused on the resilience and courage of African women.

Musically, the key track here may be Kamelemba, with keyboard washes beneath the hunter's harp, the kamele n'goni, and subtle phasing added. Tony Allen adds a terrific beat to Yere Faga; there's an almost McCartney-like melody from the bass on Mali Niale. Sangaré's backing singers, meanwhile, seem to be having the most fun.

Wisely not handing over the reins completely to the makeover crew, the new Sangaré is not so very different from the old one – and when you have a voice like hers, it really doesn't make a lot of difference what knobs are being twiddled in the studio. Sangaré rocks in her own way, and nothing is ever going to change that.



Jane Birkin

★★★★★

Birkin/Gainsbourg:
Le Symphonique

PARLOPHONE. CD/DL/LP

A new slant on the Gallic provocateur's songbook from his supreme champion.

With Chopin core to Serge Gainsbourg's songwriting sensibility, the arrival of a suite of orchestral versions of his compositions should come as no surprise. That the voice singing the songs in their original French is Jane Birkin's is also unsurprising. She was his muse and wife and, following his death in 1991, has remained his highest-profile torchbearer. Fittingly, and belatedly, *Birkin/Gainsbourg: Le Symphonique* recasts 21 Gainsbourg classics. The orchestrator is composer/pianist Nobuyuki Nakajima,

who Birkin first worked with in 2011. Lush and filmic rather than classical, the arrangements evoke Howard Shore, especially his score for the Martin Scorsese film *Hugo*. The grandiosity means *Baby Alone* in Babylone's essence and Birkin are swamped by the orchestra, but where there is a firm rhythmic base – La Javanaise, Manon, Requiem Pour Un Con – the reimaginings bring new perspectives on the songs' melodic complexity. Serge would smile.

Kieron Tyler

Sheryl Crow

★★★★★

Be Myself

WARNER BROS. CD/DL/LP

American singer-songwriter travels back to the 1990s on her tenth album.



Sheryl Crow's previous album, 2013's *Feels Like Home*, was an easy transition into country music. In contrast, *Be Myself* finds its inspiration in her 1993 hit debut, *Tuesday Night Music Club*, and its self-titled follow-up. Crow and her long-serving co-writer Jeff

Trott have dissected the likes of If It Makes You Happy to discover what made them hits all those years ago. This means there's something familiar, if a little premeditated, about *Alone In The Dark* and *Long Way Back*. The nostalgia extends to the title track's finger-wagging lyrics, where Crow rails against hipsters, selfies and juice bars and rues the day she "gave my blues away". The thumping, Led Zeppelin-lite *Heartbeat Away* is a highpoint; the saccharine pop *Woo Woo*, less so. There are good songs here, but it sometimes sounds like Sheryl Crow is trying too hard to turn back the clock.

Mark Blake

Sneaks

★★★★★

It's A Myth

MERGE. CD/DL/LP

Less-is-more punk funk one-woman band.



Otherwise known as Washington DC native Eva Moolchan, Sneaks presents a second album that is an exercise in electro minimalism. Here 10 bass-lead

songs of beats and deadpan vocals occupy just 18 minutes; like the pioneering hardcore punks of Dischord Records, it wastes no moment, leaves no fat on the bone. But that's where the comparison ends: instead of bluster and rage, on *Hair Slick Back* and the jerk-funk of *Inside Edition*, Sneaks evokes the female post-punk spirits of Bush Tetras, ESG and Delta 5. On PBNJ (these acronymic titles reduce the pieces further still) Moolchan's often-spoken vocals are laconic and playfully detached, while *Daffodils* is a fleeting 20-second synth riff. Collectively, *It's A Myth* is like a musical Mondrian painting: all bold lines and defined patterns effortlessly delivered, but oblique and enigmatic too.

Ben Myers

Texas

★★★★★

Jump On Board

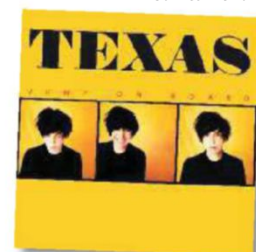
BMG. CD/DL/LP

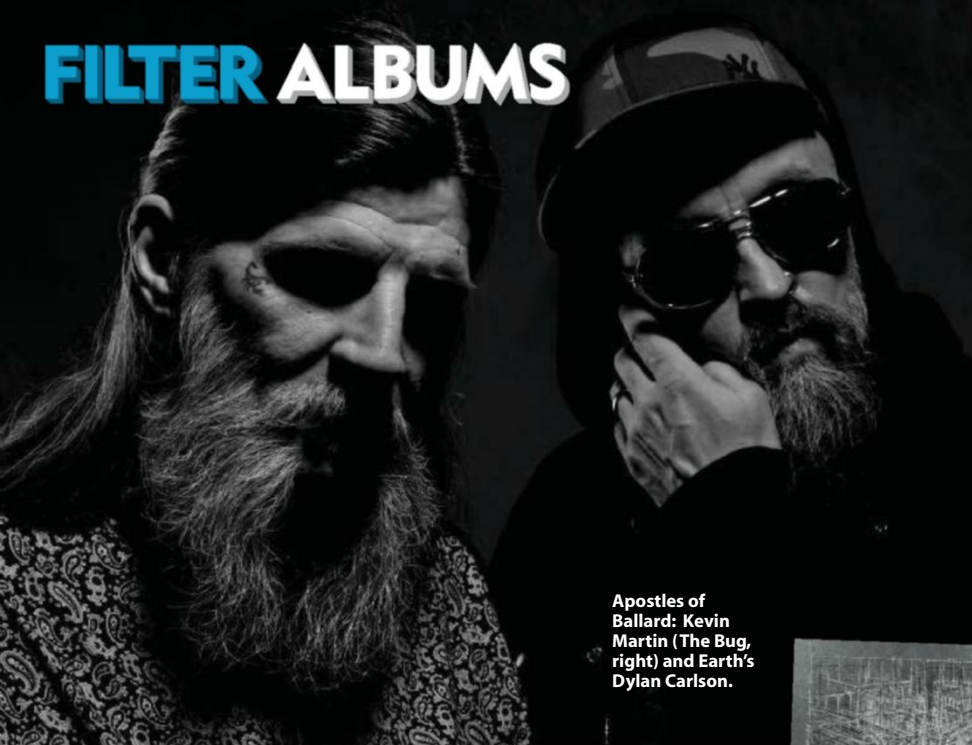
Or, you could always catch the next train.

With its chorus and bridge audibly in hock to George McCrae's evergreen great *Rock Your Baby*, *Jump On Board*'s opener *Let's Work It*

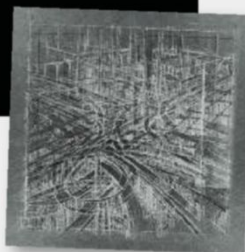
Out is about as good as Texas's ninth studio album gets. Alas, it's largely diminishing returns from there on in, as songwriters Sharileen Spiteri and Johnny McElhone decline outside help this time around and only rarely alight on something that doesn't feel formulaic. Though the No Doubt-like *For Everything* has a pleasing immediacy and Spiteri's spirited vocal develops into something that's clearly heartfelt, *Can't Control* puts a Morricone-esque "Ay-ee ay-ee ah!" where one really shouldn't be, *Won't Let You Down* is the poor relation of *The Pretenders*' *I'll Stand By You*, and a number of these rather banally-titled songs simply fizzle out. Listening in, you feel goldfish-like; swimming in oh-so-familiar circles and bound to forget all that has assailed you instantly.

James McNair





Apostles of Ballard: Kevin Martin (The Bug, right) and Earth's Dylan Carlson.



Dread cities

Kevin Martin and Dylan Carlson soundtrack the megalopolis. By Ian Harrison.

The Bug Vs Earth

★★★★★

Concrete Desert

NINJA TUNE. CD/DL/LP

AS CELEBRATED tributes by the likes of Joy Division, Hawkwind, Gary Numan and loads more have repeatedly proven, groups love JG Ballard, the visionary novelist who found

revelatory, psychological charge in the insanity and perversions of modern existence. The Bug, AKA Kevin Martin, is no exception, having said that the author's mid-'70s triple-punch of Crash, Concrete Island and High-Rise "scarred me for life". Recorded with Earth's drone-metal pioneer guitarist Dylan Carlson, the 10 out-of-body experiences of *Concrete Desert* remember, retrace and reopen similar psychic scars, reframing them in a sonic meditation on the mega-city of Los Angeles.

It's true that the two may not be the most immediately compatible collaborators – on the face of it, Martin's industrial-strength experiments in dub, grime and dancehall sit peculiarly with

Carlson's slow-riff rock and Ennio Morricone-influenced evocations of the American frontier. Yet, as well as having shared roots in the underground noise catacombs, here they find common ground in a vision of Los Angeles as a merciless, fragmented cipher for western society's delusional dreams of fantasy glamour and wealth without consequence.

The picture's hellish. Recorded on location in two days, the album builds on the sonic territory marked out by 2014's ghostly, claustrophobic 12-inch team-up *Boa/Cold*, with Carlson's guitars variously peeling forth molten distortion, rust-belt grind and, on occasion, the kind of clipped figures that feature on Sergio Leone westerns after someone's been shot, while Martin answers with predatory beats, monster bass tones and sinister metalloid textures. These are debris-strewn, tactile, slow-motion visions, thick with heat haze, fumes and chemical drizzle. Throughout, familiar forms are submerged and transformed: Don't Walk These Streets – which refers to the non-status of the pedestrian in that most automotive of cities – is a broiling clash of dub and hip-hop, while insectoid fear theme Agoraphobia suggests a gnarly, desert outlaw jam: the cold, blunted blues of Hell A, meanwhile, brings prelapsarian memories of electro and R&B.

But as with the nightmare traffic interchange depicted on the cover, there's no-one around to hear it. Martin's described it as a corollary to 2008's *London Zoo*, but a more apt comparison might be an instrumental, West Coast answer to his spectral work with King Midas Sound.

During his career, Ballard said he considered his role one of cautioning his readers of horrors yet to come – like holding a sign at the side of the road warning of a car crash up ahead, or making long range weather forecasts. In this endeavour, Carlson and Martin have joined him: evilly powerful, filmic and flowing, *Concrete Desert* is as immersive a worst-case-scenario and trip into the dark as you could hope for.



Gorillaz

★★★★★

Humanz

PARLOPHONE. CD/DL/LP

Fifth LP from Damon Albarn/Jamie Hewlett virtual reality hip-hop cartoon superstars.

Seven years ago, *Plastic Beach* cemented the idea of Gorillaz as a collaborative state-of-the-art R&B, electro and pop vehicle, a notion somewhat reversed for its low-key, experimental follow-up *The Fall*. This time, Damon Albarn blends both approaches for a boundlessly inventive and occasionally quite bonkers record that draws heavily on the input of its myriad guests – some familiar, such as Grace Jones, De La Soul and Mavis Staples, others, like Zebra Katz, Vince Staples and D.R.A.M., supremely cutting edge. Indeed, Albarn's voice is a spectral presence, save for

an unalloyed, *Weltschmerz* solo ballad Busted And Blue; instead, the visitors rule, from the syncopated electro beats of opener Ascension, with Vince Staples' sizzling politico rhyming, to the Jehnny Beth of Savages-led hippy love-up of We Got The Power (Noel Gallagher's in there somewhere), via deep house cuts like Peven Everett's Strobelite and the PiL-on-crack of Charger with Grace Jones.

Pat Gilbert

The Cairo Gang

★★★★★

Untouchable

GOD? CD/DL/LP/MC

Emmett Kelly's ageless love letter to '60s/early-'70s pop quality.



Segall (co-producer here), during notably fertile periods for each boss. Already thus established as a premier-league harmony singer and arranger, his own band's a class act to boot, spiriting up the on-the-fly compositional magic you hear in all the great

cuts from rock's golden era. Broken Record opens with the neolithic wallop of a Troggs riff, yet dressed in the sonic finery of The Byrds in '65 – as brilliant-sounding a start to an album as any in 2017, and it doesn't disappoint thereafter. That's When It's Over bridges between bozo glam riffage à la Lou Reed's Vicious, and breathtaking twin-guitar tussling evocative of Jimi Hendrix or Television. Shades elsewhere of Big Star (What Can You Do?) and T.Rex (title track), yet as with its celebrated predecessor *Goes Missing*, *Untouchable*'s never about empty replication: it's soulful, spiritually questing – pretty much irresistible, too.

Andrew Perry

Hawkwind

★★★★★

Into The Woods

CHERRY RED. CD/LP

Britain's greatest 'underground' band go foraging.



While their previous studio album, the conceptual *The Machine Stops*, was based on EM Forster's dystopian novel of the same

name, its successor is an altogether more positive attempt to commune with nature. The driving, opening title track matches muscle with texture. Cottage In The Woods follows, offering a pastoral, genteel counterpoint, and underlining the band's oft-overlooked melodic acumen. Armed with a clattering, earthy production, these 13 tracks find Dave Brock and his men restating the importance of causes close to their heart: Ascent espouses a message of unity and love, while the wry Vegan Lunch proclaims that we should "eat more vegetables and be kind." As Brock confirmed in last month's MOJO Interview, *Into The Woods* is the sound of a band who, 27 studio albums into their career, clearly still have something to say and are having fun saying it.

Phil Alexander

L.A. Takedown

★★★★★

II

RIBBON. CD/DL/LP

Aaron M. Olson's "Baywatch meets Krautrock" album.

Part synth pop, part prog, and part '80s-sounding shred

guitar, L.A. Takedown's filmic, all-instrumental successor to their self-titled debut comes with suggested ways to imbibe. "Put this album on, mute your TV, and watch the Planet Earth series," point six suggests, but lest David Attenborough morph into The Hoff, your scribe advises forgoing the "doobie" Olson prescribes in point two. There's a lot to enjoy in his seven-piece band's alternative soundtrack to La La Land, a place where Vangelis takes on Tangerine Dream (Heatwave), Steve Vai seems to vie with The Allman Brothers Band (Us; Night Skiing), and the phoned-in muzak of soft-porn is repurposed to artful effect (L.A. Blue). At its best, *It* packs a winning, sun-scorched lethargy, and with City Of Glass conjuring Robert Fripp riffing on Steve Reich, the surprises keep coming.

James McNair



Phil Sharp

Ian William Craig

★★★★

Slow Vessels

FAT CAT. [DL/LP](#)

Vancouver singer-songwriter's 2016 album *Centres* re-imagined acoustically



Centres delivered a cryptic mix of melodic songs and blurry sonics, but *Slow Vessels*, recorded in a flat in Gothenburg, strips all that away, so *The Nearness*, originally stated on a reedy keyboard and half buried in layers of electronic squall, is here played as a piano ballad. By contrast, *Purpose (Is No Country)* was originally a complex a cappella construction, but is now a folksy finger-picking affair. Craig has a really fine voice, which is given plenty of space to explore in these new versions. But it's not that straightforward – there is some electronic manipulation, which sounds like channel leakage from the original album and at times the piano is swathed in cathedral reverb. But the oddest thing is that it was recorded using auto level, so when the music gets quieter there is an irritating increase in tape hiss.

Mike Barnes

Chastity Belt

★★★★

I Used To Spend So Much Time Alone

SUB POP. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Millennial tensions given tender, wise voice.



In case the title to the first track, *Different Now*, spooks fans, Chastity Belt's third LP heralds no drastic stylistic change for the Seattle quartet, their bittersweet chords and potent, hungover melodies still a luminous vehicle for Julia Shapiro's astute, droll observations. But while there remains a dreamy charm to their instrumental interplay – like later-period Pavement constructing slovenly lullabies – the passage of time has cast gloom over Shapiro's lyrics,

continuing her evolution from the likes of Giant Vagina off their debut, to songs like *Something Else and Used To Spend*, songs about gradual estrangement from your friends, the negotiation between dreams and cold reality. Not that moody introspection is really Shapiro's thing – she essays her millennial crises with the unsentimental wit of a Noah Baumbach – but the foggy nights of the soul chronicled here lend Chastity Belt's bruised indie pop a weight that suits it.

Stevie Chick



Black Lips

★★★★

Satan's Graffiti Or God's Art?

VICE. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Strong ninth album of kaleidoscopic punk merriment.

That Black Lips have been releasing records for 15 years seems incredible, given their source material is largely gleaned from that brief spell in the 1960s when garage rock segued into psychedelia. Produced by Sean Lennon, featuring Yoko Ono and Fat White Family's Saul Adamczewski, and with saxophonist Zumi Rosow adding a new lush layer of sound to the ragged punk rush, their ninth studio album is simultaneously more cosmic and conceptual than earlier efforts. Book-ended by an *Overture* and a *Finale* and interrupted by bongo interludes, it is something of a journey. *Got Me All Alone* might offer standard sleaze-blues but *We Know* is built on a glorious swirl of id-destroying organ, *Lucid Nightmare* is Beefheartian in its wonkiness and *Wayne* goes higher than *The 13th Floor Elevators*, before *It Won't Be Long* finds Black Lips firmly

back in their distinct twee-punk territory.

Ben Myers

Mark Mulcahy

★★★★

The Possum In The Driveway

MEZZOTINT. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Miracle Legion leader's first new solo material for four years.



Not one for hasty releases, former *Miracle Legion* frontman Mark Mulcahy has been unusually busy. Re-releasing his old band's all-but-lost final album last year, he now has two solo records in quick succession, this first one initially limited to Record Store Day vinyl before going on general release. Mulcahy claims it took him "years to make and years off his life", and it's easy to see why. All of domesticity is here: the gratefulness and guilt that goes with marriage to someone you genuinely view as your better half, overwhelming love for and total bewilderment of children, the prickly itch of just trying to hold it together and keep ahead of the bad guys. Mulcahy follows the songs through rock, jazz and indie pop, from opening lullaby *Stuck On Something Else* to the Robert Wyatt-esque *Geraldine*, a rare and wise treat from an underrated songwriter.

Andy Fyfe

Mountain Goats

★★★★

Goths

MERGE. [CD/DL/LP](#)

John Darnielle gets back in black.



Only two tracks here actually evoke goth gloom. More suggest, surprisingly, McCartney or Bacharach, with Philly soul and Southern horns. (Matt Douglas on woodwinds is an ace addition.) But all the subculture details are lovingly etched: the Batcave club, the spiderweb dance, Siouxsie and Sisters Of Mercy's Andrew Eldritch. Songwriter Darnielle expertly renders the acute emotions of adopting a new tribe and the resignation that life often forces. Kids try new guises, compare ("I'm hardcore, but I'm not that hardcore") and compete ("Dave went to New York, I don't care/You can't shut people up once they get back from their Christmas out there"). Ultimately, "however big that chorused bass may throb, you and me, and all of us, are going to have to find a job." That may not be Darnielle's life, but you'd be hard-pressed to tell.

Chris Nelson

UNDERGROUND

BY ANDREW MALE



Stephan Meidell

★★★★

Metrics

HUBRO. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Norwegian composer's deep abstractions for guitar, electronics and baroque chamber quintet.

ANOTHER MONTH, another excellent release from Norwegian jazz and improv label Hubro. For his second solo outing, after 2014 debut *Cascades*, Meidell (who plays guitar, bass and synths with the label's kosmische noise trio *Cakewalk*) has expanded the site-specific monochrome improv of that first album (recorded in industrial silos and meat lockers) adding a quintet of musicians playing piano, clarinet, baroque violin, harpsichord and hardanger fiddle (labelmate Erlend Apneseth). Drawing on such influences as spy soundtracks, horror scores, *musique concrète*, minimal techno, field recordings and free jazz, Meidell blends ancient and modern, urban and pastoral moods for an album that pulls the listener through strange historic landscapes in which wild animal cries, early music drones, wintry Japanese percussion and futuristic machine rhythms mutually coexist.

ALSO RELEASED

Linda Catlin Smith

★★★★

Drifter

ANOTHER TIMBRE. [CD](#)



Ten haunting Feldmanesque works of fractured lyricism, melodic decay and slow suspended beauty for piano and strings from the Toronto-based composer. Part of label-owner Simon Reynell's impressive 2017 project to document Canada's current wave of "defiantly individual" modern composers.

Gigi Masin & Charles Hayward

★★★★

Les Nouvelles Musiques De Chambre Volume 2

MODERN CLASSICS RECORDINGS. [CD/DL/LP](#)



From a series of recordings inspired by city waterways, originally released on Belgium's Sub Rosa label in 1989, Italian composer Masin hymns Venice with keyboard and tape nocturnes, while This Heat drummer Hayward uses cymbals, guitar and piano for a side-long work of depthless lurking dread, entitled *Thames Water Authority*.

Will Guthrie

★★★★

People Pleaser

BLACK TRUFFLE. [DL/LP](#)



Equally inspired by J Dilla rough-cuts and Jacques Poullin's *musique concrète*, Australian free-jazz percussionist and electro-acoustic aggressor Guthrie splices hardcore drum pounding and digital scree with clacking skate-video rhythms, police interrogation tapes, jump jive loops and early music polyphony for a full-on sonic assault that is also strangely soothing.

Gas

★★★★

Narkopop

KOMPAKT. [CD/DL/LP](#)



Cologne's Wolfgang Voigt returns with his first new Gas album in 17 years, adjusting the controls for the heart of the Black Forest, constructing grand intermeshing spinneys of lush ambient sound, distant pounding beats, lonesome horns and glimpsed shadows of melody that hint at Beethoven, Mozart and older Teutonic ghosts. *AM*



Chastity Belt: astute, droll, gloomy, weighty.

Dealing in the truly profound: Jane Weaver keeps her silver globe spinning.



Miss Universe

Striking sonic traveller journeys to new exotic worlds. By John Harris.

Jane Weaver

★★★★★

Modern Kosmology

FIRE. CD/DL/LP

JANE WEAVER'S backstory lays in her native North-west, and the early-1990s, Peel-favoured indie rockers Kill Laura, but her watershed

moment belatedly arrived with 2014's *The Silver Globe* – a slow-burn cult success enthused about in record shops' 'Staff picks' sections and on social media. Since 2002, its author had released a stream of folkish stuff that revealed real songwriting talent. Now, her more pastoral aspects were combined with such touchstones as Hawkwind, Neul and the early Human League, which couched everything in the kind of retro-futurism captured by the title, taken from a mid-'70s Polish sci-fi movie that was banned by the Communist authorities.

Anyone who loved that record will be relieved to hear that this latest album finds

Weaver exploring similar territory, and that *Modern Kosmology* is every bit as good as its predecessor. The same essential ingredients are here: Kraut-ish repetition, analogue synths, beguiling vocal melodies. In lesser hands, such building-blocks might suggest hipster tedium of the kind that now clogs up so many record racks. Weaver is light years beyond that, using motorik rhythms and ancient technology to create music that brims with urgency, and originality.

There is real creative bravery at work here, often manifested in a less-is-more sensibility that pays real dividends. The fragile, emotive lead-off single *Slow Motion* is built on little more than a couple of keyboard parts and Weaver's vocals; the mesmeric *The Lightning Back* might be composed of even less. But both showcase an instinctive grasp of how to use old-fashioned technology to evoke the way that our collective present is shot through with traces of the distant past (in that sense, she's a practitioner of what the modern critical vocabulary calls 'hauntology'). Elsewhere, the same essential approach is used in the service of very effective pop music – as on *You Are The Architect*, pitched somewhere between Visage and the great lost Mancunian visionaries *World Of Twist*.

The influence of the early Velvets subtly intrudes on *Loops In The Secret Society* and *Ravenspoint*. Perhaps best of all is *Valley*, a rather blankly-titled masterstroke that combines Weaver's music then and now, using the sparsest of arrangements for a song seemingly inspired by Sandy Denny circa *The North Star Grassman And The Ravens*. As with so much of Weaver's recent work, everything is here: intimations of mortality ("We're on our way to dust," says a male narrator), the impression of someone dealing in the truly profound, and a sense of artistic maturity, in the best possible way. Jane Weaver is 44: on this evidence, she is hitting her creative stride to brilliant effect.



Feist

★★★★★

Pleasure

POLYDOR. CD/DL/LP

After a six-year gap, Leslie Feist's challenging and emotionally raw fifth LP.

As if trying to utterly obliterate the memory of her twirling and happy-clapping her way through the iPod-selling video/advertisement for 1234, Feist's long-gestated latest is a vérité recording in which room ambience and amp buzz have been left in the mixes to underline the soul-baring sentiments of the songs. The result is akin to P.J. Harvey's *4-Track Demos* with, if anything, added intensity in terms of its confessional qualities. Titles such as *I Wish I Didn't Miss You*, *Lost Dreams* and *Get Not High, Get Not Low* speak for themselves and the arrangements are variously

pin-drop hushed or teeth-grindingly distorted. Throughout, her voice is a thing of rare wonder, honed down the years to masterful delivery, acting as the centrepiece of a record that is demanding and compelling, though often beautiful.

Tom Doyle

Little Dragon

★★★★★

Season High

BECAUSE MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

Futuristic Swedish dance pop with a nod to the '80s.



The trams rattle sedately around Sweden's second city, Gothenburg, the slow clank of the Domkyrkan (cathedral) bells seemingly setting the pace. It seems an odd place to have become a death metal hub. Sparkling synth-pop quartet Little Dragon feel more representative Gothenburgers. The follow-up to 2014's Grammy-nominated *Nabuma Rubberband* finds them in upbeat mood. Opportunely en vogue, the 1980s provide much inspiration – there's a

decidedly purple hue to proceedings. It's highlighted by the Princely funk of *Celebrate*, while hints of those mavens of sleek, pop R&B, Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, percolate throughout. Sweet, for example, updates *Control*-era Janet Jackson with cheeky, chiptune house stylings. *Season High*'s pivotal moment, however, is *Butterflies*, where endless arpeggios, celestial minor chords and Yukimi Nagano's winsome vocal timbre combine in a tidal wave of glorious emotion. Clever and cool, *Season High* is a career high.

Stephen Worthly

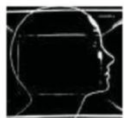
Slowdive

★★★★★

Slowdive

DEAD OCEANS. CD/DL/LP

Fourth studio album from Berkshire shoegazers, just 22 years after the last one.



Surely no band has seen their cultural capital rise as much in the past 20 years as Slowdive: their hazy, lambent sound, dismissed by Britpop Luddites, hated "more than Hitler" by Richey Manic,

became an audible influence on every woozy, washed-out act from Beach House and Deerhunter to Grimes and Lana Del Rey. Now, following a 2014 reunion and a rapturously received run of live shows, comes a new album. Recorded in the Courtyard in Oxford, and mixed at Sunset Sound in Los Angeles by Beach House producer Chris Coady, *Slowdive* is a surprisingly joyous return to the fray. Aside from album closer, *Falling Ashes*, which holds close to the spectral electronic minimalism of 1995's 'farewell' album, *Pygmalion*, this is swirling slow-motion pop euphoria, invested with a melancholy and depth accrued from the passing years. Lovely.

Andrew Male

Stevie Parker

★★★★★

The Cure

VIRGIN EMI. CD/DL/LP

Frome-raised 24-year-old reimagining the sound of '90s Bristol.

With her baggy black jumpers and hair messily tangled into a pony tail, Stevie Parker cuts an anti-image figure

reminiscent of Portishead's Beth Gibbons, in marked contrast to her glam contemporaries. For all its moodiness though, *The Cure* is a slicker proposition than its grittier trip-hop inspirations, thanks to the presence of Maverick Sabre/Duffy writer/producer Jimmy Hogarth, while mixer David Wrench (FKA *Twigs*; *Caribou*) lends his trademark low-end sonic punch. There's real emotional honesty here as Parker details her troubles of the heart, whether surrendering to a fractured relationship with her first girlfriend in the title track or defiantly stating her independence to the accompaniment of thumping tom toms in *Without You*. Meanwhile, her lovely, nuanced voice is fully spotlighted amid the passions of both *Stay* and *Better Off*, showcasing a remarkable new talent.

Tom Doyle



Rebecca Linton

Ásgeir

★★★★

Afterglow

ONE LITTLE INDIAN. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Influences smother individuality on the Icelandic successor to the 2014 smash *In The Silence*.



Despite a new lap-top electro slant and dashes of treated vocal, much is familiar on Icelandic singer-songwriter Ásgeir Trausti's follow-up to his 2014 debut English-language album *In The Silence*. The global best-seller drew comparisons with Bon Iver and so it is with *Afterglow*, which co-opts the former's electro-R&B angle. He also seems to have cultivated a fondness for James Blake. The songs – especially the acoustic-bedded New Day and kinetic, shuffling I Know You Know – are memorable but lack the preceding album's drama. *In The Silence* was, with the help of John Grant, an English-language reconfiguration of the Icelandic *Dýrð í dauðapögn* but there is no transliteration this time; though one track, the string-infused and gospel-ish Fennir yfir, is in Icelandic, and is this album's highlight. Unfortunately, *Afterglow* further embraces, and is overshadowed by, his influences.

Kieron Tyler

At The Drive In

★★★★★

in • ter a • li • a

RISE. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Thunderous comeback from the Tex-Mex-Puerto Rican post-hardcore pioneers.



Rising from the Fugazi-inspired post-hardcore underground, At The Drive-In were too sussed to become mainstream rock casualties à la Kurt Cobain; their sudden split in 2001 – as explosive as their legendary live show – probably saved their lives. Time has not diminished their power either: from opener No Wolf Like The Present, their progressive, Latino-filtered punk surge is pure musical adrenaline. Cedric Bixler-Zavala's staccato vocals and surrealist lyrics evoke images of Ballard/Burroughsian poetic absurdity, while guitarist Omar Rodríguez-López squeezes out kaleidoscopic and delineated sounds like no other. At the heart of Continuum and Incurably Innocent are untamed pop melodies that writhe like snapped power-lines, while berserk closer Hostage Stamps is a glorious collision of Jane's Addiction, Minor Threat and Mahavishnu Orchestra. All remind just why ATDI's unique vision for future-facing, galvanised rock music is more necessary than ever.

Ben Myers



Edgar Jones

★★★★★

The Song Of Day And Night

SKELETON KEY. [CD/DL/LP](#)

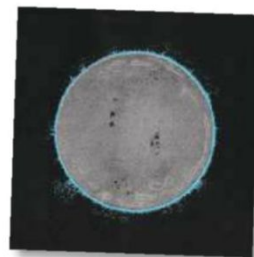
Follow-up to 2013's *Morphic Fields* by Stairs frontman.

Despite a difficult conception – recorded piecemeal over two years in his dilapidated home studio around work with the newly reformed Stairs – *The Song Of Day And Night* catches Jones AKA Summertime at his best. Serendipity Doo and Big Eyed Boo draw on the spirit of Allen Toussaint to summon the heat and haze of the gator swamps; Best Thing is a voodoo blues with the trippy spirit of Dr. John; on Thinkin' Bout The Time, northern and southern states collide as Edgar and his duet partner, Nina Jones, play Lee Dorsey and Betty Harris over a knock-off Motown sound and fuzz guitar. But Jones long ago transcended his influences; here his garbled vocals and booming basslines spearhead his very own Mersey beat.

Lois Wilson

production. This time everything's on his terms, which lean more toward the handmade, crafted variety; whittled-down singer-songwriter intimacy, and recorded in remote Donegal with local musicians. It pays off. Opener Still is majestic, measured dark grunge, not far from Neil Young's After The Gold Rush. Oh My God is boisterously in love: "Oh my God, is your heart racing?/Oh my God I won't stop chasing you." Elsewhere, there's a heartfelt, almost strangled Damien Rice/Tom Odell passion – gritty, raging but hopeful. The triumphant Cynic is a kind of lullaby for his new wife: "I am a cynic, it is my sin/Never let anyone close/My stony heart is melting, my love, my love, my love..." Occasionally heavy, always affecting.

Glyn Brown



Endless Boogie

★★★★★

Vibe Killer

NO QUARTER. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Fifth studio set kicks out the jams: six tracks, averaging over seven minutes each.

Thanks to their jam band origins, Endless Boogie are adept at doing extended. Their MO is to set up a boogie/stoner groove and then get on a drone that could last for ever. Texture is applied by two guitars – wah wah and psychedelic fuzz – and meaning is provided by Paul Major's gruff, growled vocals that relate lyrics of fury and disgust (Vibe Killer), unexplained unease (Let It Be Unknown) or the circular

nature of low-life activity (High Drag, Hard Doin'). Best of all is Back In '74, a cautionary tale about shaved eyebrows, LSD, a kite festival and Kiss. Simultaneously intelligent and basic, spacey and intense, Endless Boogie do what rock music used to do and still can: provide an alternative to the mainstream, celebrate the marginal, and provide an emotional outlet for current events. Their disgust is timely, and their primordial ooze drones make for great meditative driving music. Highly recommended.

Jon Savage



Moon Duo

★★★★

Occult Architecture Vol 2

SACRED BONES. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Portland, Oregon duo present the second half of the series; yang to the previous release's yin.

Vol 2 begins with the glowing energy surge of New Dawn with a drum machine, a mesh of keyboards by Sanae Yamada and heavily effected guitar by Ripley Johnson. The verse pivots around a couple of chords and brings to mind early Stereolab, even Spacemen 3. This is intended to be the lighter of the two albums although the stylistic differences aren't great. Sevens finds the duo singing harmonies with a strong tune that gets some traction on the mantric three-chord structure, and there is some extra percussion and a strident, spaced-out guitar solo. The instrumental Mirror's Edge drifts along with three chords

and a noodling guitar in a way that doesn't have quite the same focus, while Lost In Light and the 10-minute instrumental The Crystal World feel more lacking in ideas than mesmeric.

Mike Barnes

Ron Sexsmith

★★★★★

The Last Rider

COOKING VINYL. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Cover shot sees Sexsmith and his band pastiche The Last Supper.

"They've picked all the berries that grew on Blueberry Hill," sings Sexsmith on Radio. It's a neat metaphor for any songwriter's fear of a lame harvest, but studio album number 14 finds Ron bringing in the sheaves. Mere syllables into the civil request for stoicism that is It Won't Last For Long, we've already fallen back in love with Sexsmith's consolatory, subtly-malleable voice. And if the spell is just occasionally broken over the course of 15 new songs recorded with his able, similarly unfussy touring band, there's no doubting the magic of Man At The Gate (1913), which draws inspiration from a second-hand postcard find and ghosts out on the Canadian equivalent of colliery brass. There's an appealing stealth and positivity to Ron's writing here, the Harry Nilsson-like Dreams Are Bigger and evocative childhood snapshot Breakfast Ethereal emerging as bullseyes over repeat plays.

James McNair



Luke Sital-Singh

★★★★

Time Is A Riddle

RAYGUN/RED ESSENTIAL. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Intense pop/rock in the manner of David Gray.



A self-confessed 'grumpy git', Sital-Singh worries that his debut, three years ago, was compromised by the major label and big



Moon Duo's Sanae Yamada (left) and Ripley Johnson: the yang ones.

Perfumed Genius's Mike Hadreas comes up smelling of roses.

Blondie

★★★★
Pollinator

BMG. CD/DL/LP

Follow-up to 2014's *Ghosts Of Download* teams band and their fave modern artists.

Blondie always took a conceptualist's view of pop, from their glossy but sable take on new wave to pioneering cross-pollinations with the city's black disco and rap scenes. So it's not entirely unnatural for their eleventh studio album to deconstruct the very essence of what Blondie is, and call upon like-minded souls to write their record for them. Some choices have an obvious logic, such as Johnny Marr, with his exuberant *My Monster*, and Dev Hynes' *Heart Of Glass* homage *Long Time*; others reflect Debbie Harry and Chris Stein's fascination with US web culture, like satirical YouTubers *The Gregory Brothers'* perfectly poppy *When I Gave Up On You*. David Sitek, Charlie XCX and Sia also appear, as do a couple of Harry/Stein originals including the magnificent *Doom Or Destiny*. Miraculously, the whole thing is given a neat completeness by John Congleton's slick, electro-rock production.

Pat Gilbert



The Charlatans

★★★★
Different Days

BMG. CD/DL/LP/MC

Cast of thousands (approx) help bring steadfast band's 13th album into the light.

Paul Weller and Johnny Marr, Gillian Gilbert and Stephen Morris, Sharon Horgan and Ian Rankin: the guest list on *Different Days* is formidable, if occasionally distracting. Despite the Twitter-feed personnel, The Charlatans' newest burst of late-phase creativity feels remarkably cohesive. "Trying to get back there again with you," sings Tim Burgess on Weller collaboration *Spinning Out*, and *Different Days* seems to be in pursuit of this state of grace, the songs focused on working out the kinks and creases in various kinds of inner-space. That can involve the cosmic Germanic synths that close *Over Again* or glint through instrumental *The Setting Sun* or the more euphorically ravey communions of *The Same House* and *Let's Go Together*. But the muted melancholia of *Hey Sunrise*, merging the domestic and the psychedelic, best encapsulates the 2017 Charlatans: enduring, reliable, but far from set in their ways.

Victoria Segal

Perfume Genius

★★★★
No Shape

MATADOR. CD/DL/LP

Seattle's boy Genius's fourth. Now in Cinerama.

Mike Hadreas's 2010 debut matched Anohni's *I Am A Bird Now* for fragility and a despair/hope dichotomy born from self-doubt and queer (in)visibility. By 2014's *Too Bright*, Hadreas had gained the confidence to bulk up his hushed piano ballads, but *No Shape* is writ huge. Producer Blake Mills wraps Hadreas's love of vintage soul and doo wop in dynamic shivery sensurround; cascading strings, electric piano, depth-charge beats, plus odd-man-out glam drama *Sides* (co-sung with Weyes Blood) with Bolanesque lead guitar. *Run Me Through* is hugest, Michael Kiwanuka-style, though Hadreas's trademark vulnerability remains. Likewise, his cries against oppression (*Slip Away*: "they'll never break the shape we take"), the anguish of having to face that oppression and the search for acceptance make for a heady, volatile brew that, in these emboldened settings, have the makings of anthems.

Martin Aston



Jim Jones & The Righteous Mind

★★★★
Super Natural

MASONIC/HOUND GAWD. CD/DL/LP

Hellzapoppin' Brit-blues rebirth of a true believer.



Three decades after debuting with *Thee Hypnotics*, Jim Jones's devotional fervour for worshipping in the church of noise shows no sign of fading. With a new band in tow, it's very much bombastic blues-rock business as usual. Fortunately, no one does it better and on *Base Is Loaded* Jones lurches and gurgles like Tom Waits fronting *The Birthday Party*. *Super Natural* is a wholly visceral experience, plugging into the same socket that animated Jerry Lee Lewis back in '57. The gang chants of *Aldecide* and the taut, dark drama of *Boil Your Blood* offer strange incantations to summon the spirit of rock'n'roll as it was – and, to those like Jones and his rabble, always will be. That such devilishly good music as the restrained urban noir of *Shallow Grave* is being made in England today is to be treasured.

Ben Myers



Eight Rounds Rapid

★★★★
Objet D'Art

CADIZ MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

Second outing from avant-geezers Southend surrealists.

2015's *Loss Leader* debuted Eight Rounds Rapid's extraordinary blues-punk, vocalist David Alexander's angry-Lydon tonalities masking a similarly alluring outsider intelligence and nutty humour (check out *Dostoyevsky* and the peerless *Steve*), while Wilko's son Simon Johnson cooked up a squalling, rhythm-lead assault, like the old man's shtick only with added fuzz-box madness. *Objet D'Art* pushes their English seaside eccentricities further towards glorious old-school Stiff Records territory, with the wonky jazz sax of *Practical* and plaintive harp of *Johnnie Ray* providing a trippy counterpoint to the acid oi-oi! bounce of coruscating opener *Bully Boy* and scummy *Like It*. Mick Farren's song *Drink* is also given an ERR going-over. "String Theory and the last days of Rome!" shouts Alexander at one point, one of many joyously opaque

moments on what is undoubtedly another great and highly singular album.

Pat Gilbert

Don Bryant

★★★★
Don't Give Up On Love

FAT POSSUM. CD/DL/LP

Patterned on Solomon Burke's 2002 *Don't Give Up On Me*; every bit as good.



Don Bryant was integral in the creation of the Hi Records sound. Not as a singer, although his voice is expressive on 1969 label outing *Precious Soul*, but as a songwriter, who penned hits for Al Green and Ann Peebles, his wife of 43 years. *Don't Give Up On Love*, dedicated to Peebles, reconnects the 74-year-old with those Memphis roots, setting him live in the moment with members of the Hi Rhythm Section, with whom he worked at Hi. Throughout, Bryant's vocal is rich and full on songs that are framed in exclamatory horns and soothing organ, and range from the rousing *How Do I Get There?* and the cocksure *One Ain't Enough* to the muscular *A Nickel And A Nail* and swooning *Something About You*.

Lois Wilson

Pond

★★★★
The Weather

MARATHON ARTISTS. CD/DL/LP

Eccentric and unpredictable seventh album from Aussie space cadets.



Emerging from the same member-swapping psych rock gene-pool as Tame Impala, Perth's Pond have been the crazed, freak-friendly cousin to their more successful friends. Leader Nick Allbrook may have ceased being a member of Tame Impala in 2013, but, as with 2015's excellent *Man It Feels Like Space Again*, one-time Pond drummer Kevin Parker returns here as producer. The result is wilfully schizophrenic. Much of *The Weather* treads a remarkably similar, laser-guided pop path as Tame Impala's *Currents*, but for the main it's bubbling with bonkers, proggy eccentricities. The likes of 30,000 Megatons' nuclear Armageddon-welcoming bombast, the stuttering R&B mash-up *Colder Than Ice* and Allbrook's frequent WTF?! lyrical curveballs keep it impossible to second guess. Lord only knows what they put in the water down there, but it continues to produce wildly imaginative music.

Chris Catchpole

John Mellencamp

★★★★★

Sad Clowns & Hillbillies

REPUBLIC. CD/DL/LP

US roots rocker's almost-country duets album.



Country music and John Mellencamp have been a good fit ever since he first dabbled on 1987's *The Lonesome Jubilee*. Thirty years, three marriages and one heart attack later, these 13 songs come with several lifetimes' worth of experience. Five are duets with country royalty Carlene Carter, while the swaggering single Grandview partners him with '90s-vintage Nashville star Martina McBride. Mobile Blue and Battle Of Angels are the sort of chippy working-man anthems that powered fine '80s-era albums such as *Uh Huh* and *Scarecrow*. But it's on the Mellencamp/Carter duets *Indigo Sunset* and the tough, self-questioning *What Kind Of Man Am I* that it all shifts up a gear, while Easy Target rounds everything off with scathing commentary on trigger-happy America. Mellencamp broke a long dry spell with 2014's *Plain Spoken*. *Sad Clowns & Hillbillies* suggests he's not done yet.

Mark Blake

abstract passages – the beatless, sleepy-eyed chiaroscuro of *Lentísimo Halo*, the gorgeous, twilight writhing of *Cálculos Y Oráculos* – are muted, melodic puzzles that never relinquish their intrigue. Her more rhythmically charged tracks, meanwhile, infest her subterranean folksong with sleekly perverse funk, be it the surging bass lines that propel *Sin Dones* to its bristling climax, the snares, delirious whispers and firefly synth that swarm around *In The Lassae*, or the fractured blues licks throughout *A00 B01*. *Halo* dips deep into the unknown and brings back unexpected brilliance.

Stevie Chick



Diana Krall

★★★★★

Turn Up The Quiet

VERVE. CD/DL/LP

Multiple Grammy winner's triumphant return to her jazz roots.

There have been times, no doubt, when Diana Krall felt restricted by being typecast as a jazz chanteuse, and that's probably why every so often she likes to do something different, as exemplified by 2004's *The Girl In The Other Room*, where she reinvented herself as a singer/songwriter, and more recently on 2015's MOR pop excursion *Wallflower*. Despite her ability to surprise her listeners by breaking out of her comfort zone, this new album affirms that jazz is what the 52-year-old Canadian singer/pianist does best. Here, she's reunited with veteran producer Tommy LiPuma on a collection of jazz standards and the results are spectacular. Blending jaunty swingers with languorous ballads, Krall is on top form. Chief among the highlights is an exquisitely-orchestrated

bossa nova rendition of Cole Porter's *Night And Day*, delightfully infused by Krall's sultry eroticism. A classy and elegant piece of work.

Charles Waring

Sam Outlaw

★★★★★

Tenderheart

SIX SHOOTER/THIRTY TIGERS. CD/DL/LP

Intriguing second album from the LA cowpoke



Sam Outlaw's debut release, *Angeleno*, produced with the aid of Ry and Joachim

Cooder, won a UK Americana Award. *Tenderheart* is, perhaps, a tad more introspective as the Californian reflects on how success has since changed his life. The birth of a son, the constant tour grind, both have brought a sense of what is important, made evident on mariachi-tinged *Everyone's Looking For Home*. Outlaw doesn't deliver six-pack sagas, instead he offers *Bottomless Mimosas* as a morning pick-me-up. If *Trouble* has him flexing his muscles and *All My Life* whoops it up in more traditional country manner, you get the sense that he'd much rather dispense the thoughts evident in the title track or the reflective gem that is *Bougainvillea, I Think*; a half memory of a former neighbour, her name long forgotten but her floral backdrop still recalled.

Fred Dellar

Will Stratton

★★★★★

Rosewood Almanac

BELLA UNION. CD/DL/LP

US singer-songwriter nods to classic inspirations but his own voice wins out.



Shortcuts are invidious, especially so with a cohesive album, but track six of *Rosewood Almanac* brings instant proof Will Stratton is special. I See You begins with 33 seconds of finger-picked acoustic guitar laying the table for an intimate vocal reflecting on an inescapable vision. After another minute, electric guitar, piano and a female vocalist fill the picture. Just over three minutes on, Philip Glass-like strings climax the song. While masterfully arranged, it's taken to another level by an affecting, downbeat melody. This is Stratton's fifth album. His debut came in 2007. He's American, lives in New York State, was formerly a teacher. Overall, *Rosewood Almanac* – the rosewood from his favoured guitars – suggests a conjoined Jackson Browne and Nick Drake with touches of Paul Simon. *Rosewood Almanac* more than transcends its influences.

Kieron Tyler

Juana Molina

★★★★★

Halo

GRAMMED DISCS. CD/DL/LP

Finest yet from idiosyncratic Argentinian electronicist.



Twenty-five years ago, Juana Molina swapped success as a TV-sketch comic for uncharted sonic waters, like an Argentinian Julie Walters ditching Acorn Antiques to become Aphex Twin instead. Her seventh album is a sui generis treat where acoustic and electronic elements thrive in magical harmony, happening upon moments of unlikely pop along the way. The more



Juana Molina: she works her fingers to the bone.

Alejandro Ros

FOLK

BY COLIN IRWIN



Lisa Knapp

★★★★★

Till April Is Dead: A Garland Of May

EAR TO THE GROUND. CD/DL

The surreal leading the sublime in the merry morning of May.

AS IS obvious from her excellent previous two albums, the voice of Lisa Knapp is a many splendoured thing; not for nothing she's been compared to Kate Bush. Here, she creates a thematic twine of songs crafted from rituals symbolising the coming of summer, exploring and interpreting their history and mystery with equal relish, while producer Gerry Diver invests her with a characteristically leftfield cavalcade of sounds and arrangements, cuckoos and all. Graham Coxon guests on an eerie *Searching For Lambs*; David Tibet turns up to make the seriously unhinged *Staines Morris* even scarier; and Mary Hampton duets on the contrastingly dainty *Bedfordshire May Day Carol*. We also get radical re-imaginings of old favourites *Hal-An-Tow* and *Padstow May Song* as Knapp and Diver deliver ancient tradition with respect and beauty... yet manage to sound excitingly daring and enlightened as they do it.

ALSO RELEASED

Keston Cobblers Club

★★★★★

Almost Home

TRICOLOUR. CD/DL/LP



Sometimes, you just want music to make you happy. Step up to the plate Keston Cobblers Club. Not that they are frivolous – there is more substance here than on previous album *Wildfire* – but impossibly infectious choruses, jaunty arrangements and the sense of a band palpably in love with their music is joyously uplifting. The sleeve design is pretty nifty too.

Ben Hunter, Phil Wiggins & Joe Seamons

★★★★★

A Black & Tan Ball

TANTAMOUNT. CD/DL



"Blues and folk songs do not need preserving – they are preserving us..." That's a pretty great mission statement and these boys deliver on it in style as they veer from *Leadbelly* to *The Mills Brothers*. *Do Nothin' 'Til You Hear From Me* drags, but the Hunter-Wiggins partnership of violin/mandolin and guitar/banjo gets a new surge when Joe Seamons' flying harmonica comes in.

Daphne's Flight

★★★★★

Knows Time, Knows Change

FLEDG'LING. CD/DL



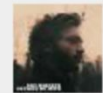
Two decades since their debut, five hardy Brit folk stalwarts – Christine Collister, Melanie Harrold, Julie Matthews, Helen Watson and Chris While – reunite. Amid the tasteful harmonies, delicate arrangements and a scattering of their own soulful material, there are some surprises too – notably the classic *Nancy Wilson* hit *How Glad I Am* and a more than decent stab at *Elvis Costello's Shipbuilding*.

Ned Roberts

★★★★★

Outside Of My Mind

AVELINE. CD/DL



This sounds like an early recording by some long-lost 1960s troubadour. Produced by Luther Russell with shades of James Taylor, post-bike crash Dylan and more... yet his guitar work is effective, his voice warm and his laid-back approach engaging, even if his songs follow a one-pace strand of *lonesome melancholia* and morose self-examination. He's a brooder, but he's no Leonard Cohen. CI



Mac DeMarco

★★★★★

This Old Dog

CAPTURED TRACKS. CD/DL/LP

Canuck songwriter quits New York City for Los Angeles; ponders the big stuff.

Well worth rescuing from the avalanche of things currently competing for your attention, Mac DeMarco's latest set of mollifying slacker rock is as easy as a Sunday morning, but a certain thematic darkness lurks beneath its fat, bone-dry snare drums and early Paul Simon-meets-Vetiver songwriting. At 26, DeMarco seems way too young to be seeing dad in the mirror, as he does on mellow beatbox strummer *My Old Man*, but the changing seasons – and death – haunt *This Old Dog* without ever hamstringing its perfectly weighted, sometimes deceptively chipper grooves. If *One Another* is a masterclass in pop economy with sleigh bells, and *Dreams From Yesterday* merges bossa nova and queasy synth to compelling effect, it's *Baby You're Out* – imagine Lennon's *Whatever Gets You Thru The Night* shot-through with flotation-tank calm – which impresses most.

James McNair

Thurston Moore

★★★★★

Rock'n'Roll Consciousness

CAROLINE. CD/DL/LP

Lengthy psych devotionals continue Moore's post-Youth purple patch.



Moore's previous solo album, 2014's *The Best Day*, suggested the career

guitar reinventor was coasting, some spark of inspiration momentarily absent. That spark returns here, though, boasting the same line-up – teaming Moore with Sonic Youth drummer Steve Shelley, MBV bassist Debbie Googe and whip-smart sideman James Sedwards – and revisiting similar territory (the potent squall of previous SY waxings *Bad Moon Rising* and *Murray Street*), yet investing them with a revived electricity. The devotional tone of the lyrics – in praise of rock'n'roll (Turn On), womanhood (Aphrodite) and the lysergic powers of love (Exalted) – play to Moore's jazzbo poet

strengths, while the longer track lengths (five songs in 40-odd minutes), offer space for Moore and Sedwards to indulge in extended conversation, stirring dark tremors and pensive explosions, and duelling cobwebby psychedelic guitar. The result is tender, powerful avant-rock to shake the walls.

Stevie Chick

Sylvan Esso

★★★★★

What Now

LOMA VISTA. CD/DL/LP

North Carolina duo's second stab at modernist pop.

Anyone drawn to Sylvan Esso's self-titled 2014 debut following Amelia Meath's part in wondrous folk-harmonisers Mountain Man probably baulked at her new digi-pop setting, courtesy of Bon Iver associate Nick Sanborn. Their follow-up moves further from



Appalachia, starting with the introductory *Sound*, which resembles an Alan Lomax field recording fed through a pitch-shifting, tape-glitching mangle, before the album settles on skittering, diamond-bright pop and R&B-leaning sass. Upbeat shakers *Kick Jump Twist*, *Just Dancing* and *Radio* firmly place them in the here-and-now, likewise lyrical references to fame, online "clicks" and the "moves of a TV queen". Sanborn's relentless modernism occasionally overwhelms Meath's sumptuous keening vocal and serpentine melodies. It's interesting to note how the album ends; with the suspenseful ballad *Slack Jaw* and an equally sombre *Rewind* suggesting that Meath still yearns for the mountains.

Martin Aston

Erasure

★★★★★

World Be Gone

MUTE. CD/DL/LP

Resurgent synth-pop veterans expertly skewer the personal and the political.



They've been in the business for over 30 years, yet Erasure's Vince

Clarke and Andy Bell still have plenty of gas left in the tank, it seems. Not only are they touring Europe's stadiums with Robbie Williams this summer, but their 17th studio album sees the duo as politically charged as they were in their late-'80s heyday. Vocalist Bell has always been unabashed in laying his heart on the line in song – this time, though, the focus is outward as much as it is inward, as titles such as *Be Careful What You Wish For!*, *Oh What A World* and *A Bitter Parting* clearly suggest. Elsewhere, the socially conscious message is rammed home by the hymnal, pleading tones of *Lousy Sum Of Nothing* ("what do you feel now the world has lost its loving?") This is a triumph of achingly beautiful pop protest music.

Matt Yates



Various

★★★★★

Resistance Radio: The Man In The High Castle

30TH CENTURY. CD/DL/LP

"A musical manifestation" of Amazon's dystopian TV series.

Produced by Danger Mouse and Sam Cohen (Apollo Sunshine; Yellowbirds), this 18-track concept record finds artists such as Sharon Van Etten, Beck and The Shins' James Mercer luxuriating in covers of illustrious songs from the early 1960s. With *The Man In The High Castle* imagining a 1962 America ruled by a victorious Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, the record's meticulously retro sonics are wholly valid. In the TV show, Resistance Radio is the pirate mouthpiece of US resistance fighters; here it serves to name a diverse collective taking turns at the canon. Beck's take on Peretti, Creator and Weiss's immortal *Can't Help Falling In Love* and James Mercer's version of *A Taste Of Honey* get right under the skin, but it's Curtis Harding's noble sounding *Lead Me On* which brings the

goosebumps. Word is that all 18 songs will feature in TMTHC's next season.

James McNair

The Afghan Whigs

★★★★★

In Spades

SUB POP. CD/DL/LP

Second reunion effort finds Whigs back to their dark, soulful best.



If 2014's *Do To The Beast* suggested that the Whigs' comeback was more than a

simple cash-in, this sequel clinches it, marking a deeper return to that midnight shade of soul frontman Greg Dulli long ago made his own. The grungy tenor of the previous album is now mostly absent: opener *Birdland* is scored by a bruising bleed of horns, while on *Arabian Heights* and *Light As A Feather*, whipcrack wah wah guitars snap like demons at Dulli's heels, as he croons bleakly. And if he has largely abandoned the self-lacerating lyrical acuity of albums like *Gentlemen*, the softer-focus heroics of *Demon In Profile*'s high drama or the anguished *Toy Automatic* suggest Dulli and his cohorts can still hold their own among those bands (*The National*, *Gaslight Anthem*) who've lucratively followed in the Whigs' wake.

Stevie Chick

Bonnie 'Prince' Billy

★★★★★

Best Troubadour

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

Underground, overground: salute to country icon from inscrutable Kentuckian.



In a 2009 interview in the New Yorker, Will Oldham recalled an old profile of Merle Haggard in the same magazine, the star pictured spread-eagled clad in only a checked shirt and ski boots: "that's, like, an ideal for me," said Oldham, who played the country hero's *It's Not Love* (But It's Not Bad) at his debut gig. Haggard died in 2016, and this is Oldham's formal tribute, a home-recorded collection of covers that roams joyfully (but not too joyfully) through six decades of songs. Carefully mapping the co-ordinates of his obsession, Oldham charts maudlin sentiment on *Roses In The Winter*, stoic fatalism on *I'm Always On A Mountain* When I Fall, and hard-won wisdom on a beautifully lo-fi *If I Could Only Fly*. If, as Oldham believes, Haggard was a "channeller" of the old ways, *Best Troubadour* is a tremendous way to keep the lines open.

Victoria Segal

Plugged in again: Thurston Moore gets his spark back.



Emily Barker

★★★★★

Sweet Kind Of Blue

EVERYONE SANG/KARTEL. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Barker recorded in Memphis with Jason Isbell's producer Matt Ross-Spang, imbuing her country-soul with luminous warmth. Highlights: her Rosetta Tharpe tribute Sister Goodbye; If We Forget To Dance could be a lost Dolly hit. *JB*



Andrew Combs

★★★★★

Canyons Of My Mind

LOOSE. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Rising Nashville star's follow-up to 2015's brilliant *All These Dreams* moves away from his countrypolitan sound to a more sophisticated Harry Nilsson-like groove, but still keeping those Music City roots. *AF*



Carl Craig

★★★★★

Versus

PLANET E/INFINI. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Detroit techno eminence plus orchestra for cyborg, electro-acoustic takes on songs from the back catalogue. Brass blasts and strings reveal cinematic vistas. Now Jeff Mills is gigging with Tony Allen, is techno mutating into the live arena? *IH*



Diagrams

★★★★★

Dorothy

BOOKSHOP. [CD/DL/LP](#)

In which Tunng's Sam Genders collaborates with nonagenarian US poet Dorothy Trogdon, weaving her direct, first-person nature writing about the earth and the skies into deceptively simple-sounding, beautifully constructed folk songs. *JB*



Steve Diggle

★★★★★

Inner Space Times

PLEDGEMUSIC. [CD/DL/LP](#)

The Buzzcock delivers his best and most diverse solo work yet, branching out from gravelly Mod rock into psych-folk, cosmic punk, VU grooves, and on the acoustic, trumpet-bedecked Way Too Far, even shades of CSN. *PG*



Fazerdaze

★★★★★

Morningside

FLYING NUN. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Wellington's Amelia Murray pins NZ's North Island as the new font of hazy brilliance. Flying Nun clearly rate her soul-bearing, artfully distorted guitar pop: her debut for the label peaks on Misread, a fuzzed-up Pixies-worthy melodic high. *JB*



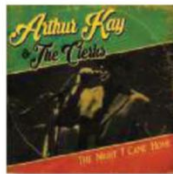
Garland Jeffreys

★★★★★

14 Steps To Harlem

LUNA PARK. [CD/DL/LP](#)

NY rock singer-songwriter looks back to hymn his parents (title track), his Brooklyn roots, The Clash (Reggae On Broadway), duets with daughter Savannah, covers The Beatles and Lou Reed, while Colored Boy Said tackles race. The full Garland. *GB*



Arthur Kay & The Clerks

★★★★★

The Night I Came Home

GROVER. [CD/LP](#)

Original Trojan Mod scenester Kay with Cologne's Clerks, who bring an authentic ska feel. Highlights: a soulful title track and anthemic Reggae 'n' Ska. *CP*



Little Cub

★★★★★

Still Life

DOMINO. [CD/DL/LP](#)

South London electro trio whose New Order-ish stream of realpolitik consciousness lyrics come leavened by a synthetic, dancefloor-wise production. If that sounds overly earnest, the wryly-titled Death Of A Football Manager is a highlight. *JB*



Janka Nabay

★★★★★

Build Music

LUAKA BOP. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Bristling electrofunk from Nabay, whose radical take on Sierra Leone's ancient Bubu tradition fizzles with Casiotone bleeps over an intricate weave of rhythms. The effect is a hypnotic chaos of deep grooves, buzz and rumble. *JB*



Amanda Palmer & Edward Ka-Spel

★★★★★

I Can Spin A Rainbow

COOKING VINYL. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Palmer and Legendary Pink Dot Ka-Spel offer gloomy, seductive avant folk-blues. Her vocals are Scott Walker-like noir; his more maniacal mouse organ. *JB*



Theme Park

★★★★★

Is This How It Starts

RECREATION. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Breezy electro pop with a high-gloss Brit funk finish. Each track is a coiled spring of infectious energy, but titles such as U R Rly Nice can make the more mature listener feel rather like a 55-year-old divorcee on Tinder. *JB*



Wilson

★★★★★

I Go Missing In My Sleep

DALLANCE. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Tamsin Wilson's slow, spartan songs with finger-picked guitar, heart-beat drums and ghostly narratives. A little under-sung in mumbling modern folk short-hand for emotion, but lovely. *JB*



Wrongtom Meets The Ragga Twins

★★★★★

In Time

TRU-THOUGHTS. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Leyton reggae reanimator meets vet Hackney MCs for a bravura recapturing of the 1980s' rootsy dancehall. Flinty and Deman are on top form; Wrongtom whips up the right rhythms: fun! *IH*

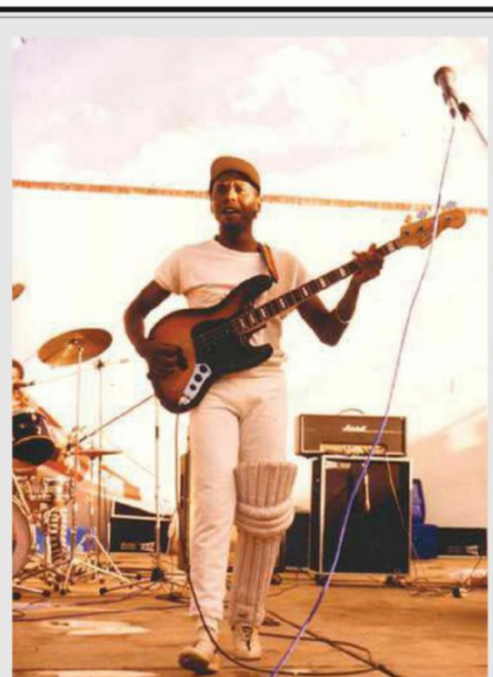
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Umoja

707

The evolution of Awesome Tapes From Africa nearly rivals the stories of the artists it's helped bring to prominence. Begun in 2006 as a blog hosting MP3s of African artists little known outside the continent, it is now a label reissuing lost classics. Next out of the crate is Umoja's (Swahili for 'unity') 1988 EP 707. Smart '80s disco meshing minimalist clicks with African rhythms, its six tracks make for a joyous collection of clever pop, taking its cues from both the sounds of Soweto and Sheffield. Deemed subversive on its release amid South Africa's grim regime of the '80s, this reissue allows the fresh, vibrant collective to shine anew. *Paul Stokes*

Find it: www.awesometapes.com



**DOG DAYS
DEVIL FISH
& DARKEST
ENGLAND**

Dark Globes

Fresh As A Sunday Morning

Previewing their slot at the Leigh Folk Festival, the rising Southend quintet deliver a sinister Bert Jansch cover.

Find it: [SoundCloud](#)

**WAVES
YOU'RE
WELCOME**

Wavves

You're Welcome The title track to Nathan Williams' sixth Wavves album (first on his own label) is a vertiginous whirl of acidic pop guitar and wobbly organ. Thrillingly addictive.

Find it: [YouTube](#)



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Here's the exclusive monthly guide to the country's most mouthwatering independent record emporia. Chosen for their knowledge of both current releases and specialist areas, they're guaranteed to provide the personal touch you won't find elsewhere. And they stock MOJO too. All where you see this sign.

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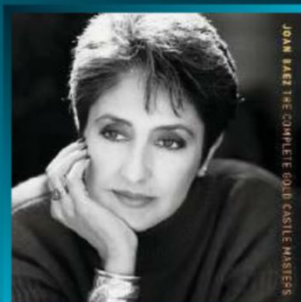
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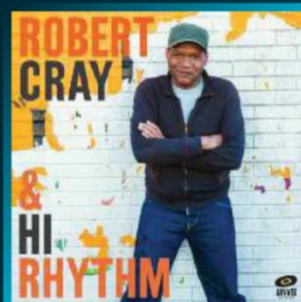
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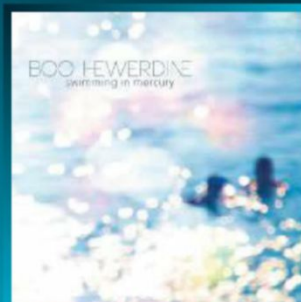
There was a moment in 1987, when a feisty and driven Joan Baez thought, "enough is enough." She rolled up her sleeves and accepted an offer from artist manager and label executive Danny Goldberg to join his latest start-up, Gold Castle, and start making records again. That decision led to the albums *Recently*, *Diamonds & Rust* in *The Bullring* and *Speaking Of Dreams* whose reappearance in 2017 should be cause for no small amount of rejoicing in Joan Baez circles.
PROPER RECORDS

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Boo Hewerdine is on tour throughout 2017, see boohewerdine.net for dates
REVEAL

METAL CHURCH CLASSIC LIVE



Produced by Kurdt Vanderhoof, this special edition release features nine classic Metal Church songs recorded live on their 2016 tour and also includes a special bonus track; a powerful new studio version of 'Fake Healer' that features a duet with Queensrÿche vocalist Todd La Torre.
RAT PAK RECORDS



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The full skinny

Thirty years of the Bad Seeds, boxed and bound: a treasure trove for the curious, an artefact for the devoted. By Victoria Segal.

Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds



Lovely Creatures:
The Best Of... (1984-2014)

MUTE/BMG. CD/LP

In the imposing hardback book with this super deluxe edition, the essays by writers, artists and academics about Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds come with intriguing photos: Cave and Polly Harvey, laughing on a sofa; hooded Bob Dylan patting the singer's shoulder at Glastonbury 1998; Cave and former guitar foil Blixa Bargeld clad as disreputable priests for The Weeping Song video. Live shots capture the band in all their laying-on-of-hands intensity, multifaceted violinist Warren Ellis in blurry motion, and – if it needs underlining after hearing the music – images that catch the bond between Cave and his Bad Seeds, a conspiratorial glint in the eye, an arm around the shoulders.

One picture demands particular scrutiny. Taken by the band's photographer ally Bladdyn Butcher in Cave's Berlin home in 1985, it shows the singer in his spikiest plumage, pen in mouth, sprawled in a bedroom that looks like an insect's nest. Through the debris a German classics book, Lexikon Der Antike, a Brigitte Bardot record, a copy of arts review The New Criterion all visible. On a shelf is a bottle of vodka and from a pipe above Cave's head, like grisly murder trophies, hang coils of long black hair (bought at a market, according to Butcher). All around are his notebooks, his famous hoard of ideas, words and pictures.

The image looks like chaos – probably was chaos – but it shows that even in his unhinged pomp, Cave was not just on a Deanna-style spree-killer songwriting rampage: he was researching, storing, shoring up material to help him

interrogate the world. Nearly 30 years and 14 Seeds later, the band recorded *Push The Sky Away*, influenced by Wikipedia rabbit-holes and whimsical Googling. Sweeping from murder ballad to love song, antic violence to philosophical caper, *Lovely Creatures* feels similarly encyclopaedic, a collection of songs pushing for answers, pushing to make sense of it all, pushing to make it more beautiful – or much uglier – than anyone could dream.

Compiled by Cave, founding member Mick Harvey, who left the band in 2008, and the current Bad Seeds, *Lovely Creatures* consists of 45 chronologically arranged tracks and a DVD of rare live footage and interview clips. Understandably, it stops before last year's grief-blasted and, as Cave calls it in the poignant afterword, "wholly necessary" *Skeleton Tree*, yet that leaves a grand



KEY TRACKS

- Tupelo
- The Mercy Seat
- (Are You) The One That I've Been Waiting For
- Push The Sky Away

sweep of material that shows their evolutionary flights and remarkable consistency. There should be a sense of rupture between filthy murder ballad Stagger Lee and holy love song Into My Arms, or the songs Cave wrote while living in Brazil in the early '90s and those he wrote in Brighton this century. Instead, there's a shared craft, a communal passion for human experience no matter how wild or intimate, these songs resonate rather than cancel each other out. Deanna from 1988's *Tender Prey*, might feel deranged compared with the learned oil-lamp studies of 1997's *The Boatman's Call* – the moment Cave assumed the mantle of proper lecture-giving gravitas – but the surgical horror of its lyrics is every bit as precise: "The winding cloth holds many moths/Around your Ku Klux furniture/I cum a death's-head in your frock/We discuss the murder pact."

Long-standing followers might find the tracklisting straightforward, but it makes a wonderful primer for the curious bystander, and for the fan updates 1998's compact best-of. The book and DVD are a lure for the latter, too, the reproduction memorabilia that flutters from the pages – a small white envelope of negatives, a sketch for a single cover, a photo labelled "Deanna" – giving a scrapbook-like quality. But there's nothing scrappy here. It feels monumental, nearly every song testament to the Bad Seeds' cardinal strengths: fluid, intuitive playing, judicious experimentation, and an intense need to respond to the world in all its horror as well as its beauty. At one end of their spectrum is 1988's *The Mercy Seat*, the last-minute testament of a man being executed by electric chair, a song that comes as close as any to capturing a tangible evil with its malign buzzing and swarming words. At the other is *Into My Arms*, from 1997's *The Boatman's Call*, a stately piano hymn, a song so convinced of love's power that the singer considers his embrace a state of grace.

Yet in between, *Lovely Creatures* contains multitudes. There are the nightmares: Tupelo (the only single off 1985's *The Firstborn Is Dead*) is a twisted Elvis nativity distilling Cave's Southern gothic; More News From Nowhere from 2008's table-rapping *Dig Lazarus Dig!!!* sees Cave at a party with all his ex-partners, a distorted, never-ending Odyssey. Meanwhile, 2013's Higgs Boson Blues, a woozy narrative, suggests the narrator is in search of the "god particle", the glue holding the planet together, but finds only visions of Miley Cyrus. Then there are the love songs. Cave's fascination with the form is well-documented, and his best are here: the Greek-mythic power of *The Ship Song*, a transitional moment in his slow move from heroin-fuelled hellraiser to professorial elder; *Straight To You's* apocalyptic last dance; and *(Are You) The One That I've Been Waiting For?*, as cherished as much for its glorious rhyme scheme as its hopeless – or hopeful – romanticism.

There's more that doesn't fit so cleanly, of course: the shiny '90s goth grand guignol of *Do You Love Me?* and *Red Right Hand*, or the philosophical and linguistic pile up of *We Call Upon The Author To Explain*, one of their finest later songs. The DVD features a smudge of interview where Cave is asked what he thinks he will be doing when he's 56. "I would hope I wasn't involved in music by then," he says tersely. "I already feel a bit guilty as it is, being involved at 28." Hearteningly, Cave calls *Lovely Creatures* "the best of the first 30 years". Of anyone else, it would be insane to say the best may yet be to come. Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds? You wouldn't put it past them.



BACK STORY: A YEAR IN PROVENCE

• Among the essays in the accompanying book, artists Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard, directors of Nick Cave film *20,000 Days On Earth*, record their visit to France to film part of the recording of *Push The Sky Away*. Among the revelations: Cave is usually first to the studio dinner table; there had been hopes Blixa Bargeld would play something but he had been unwell; there was meant to be a lost Iggy Pop/David Bowie master in the studio in France.

"THE MERCY SEAT COMES AS CLOSE AS ANY SONG TO CAPTURING EVIL WITH ITS MALIGN BUZZING AND SWARMING WORDS."

Seeking tender prey:
Nick Cave in the late
'80s with (right) Blixa
Bargeld, his guitar
foil of the time.



Singular vision:
Swans Michael Gira
and Jarboe ponder
a Black Hole.



Johnny Cash

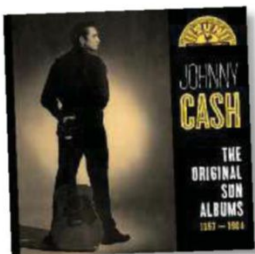
★★★★★

The Original Sun
Albums 1957-1964

CHARLY. CD

**Happy 60th birthday to
Cash's hot and blue guitar.**

When his 1957 debut album *...With His Hot And Blue Guitar* came out, Johnny Cash was already a singles star courtesy of Cry! Cry! Cry!, Folsom Prison Blues and I Walk The Line. Long-players, however, were still less than a decade new. Sam Phillips wasn't alone in underestimating the format's future, so Cash's Sun albums were bonus money-spinners, recycling current and past hits alongside whatever standards and gospel songs had been reworked enough to justify inclusion. Even his final Sun album, 1964's *Original Sun Sound Of...*, included mid-'50s recordings, but that lean Tennessee Two 'boom-chikka-boom' rockabilly chug hadn't, and still hasn't, dated. This gorgeous box – a 12-inch hardback book with seven original albums, artwork and sleeve notes, in-depth essays



and a final CD of alternative takes – captures the seeds of an actual legend. With creative editing it also produces a playlist of timeless brilliance.

Andy Fyfe

Leftfield

★★★★★

Leftism 22

SONY LEGACY UK. CD/DL/3P

**Dance music landmark
given sonic overhaul.**



Since *Leftism* was released in 1995, electronic dance music remains the popular

music genre most prone to the vagaries of trend. Having filtered rock and pop into house and techno, securing them a well-fortified beachhead in the live arena, Leftfield continue to claim immunity from such fluctuations. Now, after 22 years, *Leftism* gets a remastered reboot and a remix album. The former is handled by remastering engineer nonpareil Matt Colton. He gives Release The Pressure's techno skank and the dense, Middle Eastern-flavoured throb of Open Up a punchier, more crystalline tone that's tailor-made for the burgeoning vinyl revival. Alongside contributions from dub master Adrian Sherwood and Skream, a sprawling, spacey bass-heavy rework by Bristolian duo Hodge and Peverelist is a spectacular highlight of the remix disc, which does a

decent job of contextualising *Leftism*'s legacy. But it's the originals that still burn with rare incandescence.

Stephen Worthy

Look Blue Go Purple

★★★★★

Still Bewitched

FLYING NUN. CD/DL/3P

**Welcome return of Dunedin's
lesser-sung girl band.**



Auckland's austere post-punks Marie & The Atom represented New Zealand

women on Flying Nun's defining 1985 compilation *Tuatara*, the year Look Blue Go Purple made their first record (they were included on the subsequent CD update). But hailing from NZ indie stronghold Dunedin meant LBGP's soft-swirl jangle – a blueprint shared with early Chills – is more fondly remembered, even if the quintet's split in 1987 before making an album did little to bolster their legend. With their democratically shared vocals mixed back into the instrumental mesh (where keyboardist Norma O'Malley's flute added another lilting layer), the hazy, reticent mood of their three EPs tapped the plangent core of NZ '80s indie. As Does The Sun (from debut *Bewitched*), Cactus Cat (LBGPEP2) and I Don't Want You Anyway (from the posthumous *This Is This*)

are all prime LBGP, while the eight unrecorded and previously unreleased live tracks confirm their strengths.

Martin Aston

Grateful Dead

★★★★★

May 1977: Get Shown
The Light

RHINO. CD/DL

**Eleven-disc live box includes
revered show from Cornell U,
also out as a stand-alone LP.**



The essential Deadness that converts doubters is the *not-knowing*: what comes

next, where it'll lead, whether the fruits will be disaster or keys to the universe. That said, we'll also accept perfection. The magic of '77 Dead, and these four consecutive shows especially, is consistency. Everything the band does well, they do at peak; the usual shortcomings are nowhere in sight. Career-high performances pepper each night, as the band plays song after song with melded-mind. Even lesser cuts like Deal and Big River play like fire rather than filler. On major work – Terrapin Station, St Stephen, Scarlet Begonias – Jerry Garcia lays down playing that perpetually favours the heart over head. This is a Dead that's joyfully confident and self-aware, and audibly thrilled to share the rewards. They'd play for nearly 20 more years, but never again be this stone solid.

Chris Nelson

Swans

★★★★★

The Great Annihilator

MUTE. CD/DL/3P

**Another gap in their back
catalogue filled as this 1995
opus is newly remastered.**



Perhaps the most sonically diverse album in their colossal canon, *The Great Annihilator* was Swans' penultimate offering before the extended hiatus that put them on ice until 2010. Recorded ad hoc over a period of months while Michael Gira was, literally, camped out in a Chicago studio, though unified by a characteristically rich, expansive sound, this sprawling work draws liberally from all points in the group's past and beyond. With Jarboe lending ethereal presence to Mother's Milk, elsewhere I Am The Sun echoes early industrial clamour, Killing For Company is brooding, goth-tinted introspection and Celebrity Lifestyle edges close to alt-rock accessibility. Now expanded to include *Drainland*, Gira's solo companion piece from the same year, this is another powerful testament to his most singular vision.

Andrew Carden

The Tubby Hayes Quintet

★★★★★

Modes And Blues

GEARBOX. LP

**Previously unissued concert
from the British Coltrane.**



Though he began his solo career as a hard bop acolyte, by the early 1960s

Tubby Hayes was seeking new sonic challenges. A big Coltrane fan, Hayes was acutely aware of how the American saxophonist was breaking new ground with his simpler modal style that freed musicians from a relentless cycle of chord changes. This looser approach let Coltrane open up and extend his music, allowing longer, more exploratory solos. Hayes, too, found creative freedom by going modal as this rare archival recording of his quintet at Ronnie Scott's in '64 reveals. It consists of one 33-minute track (divided across two sides of vinyl), which begins tentatively before exploding into life. From then on it's a thrilling, white-knuckle rollercoaster ride with Hayes's tenor sax soloing flat-out for 20 minutes while never running out of steam or ideas.

Charles Waring



Dr. Octagon

★★★★★

Dr. Octagonecologist

GET ON DOWN. LP

**Deluxe 3LP set of Kool Keith's
extra-terrestrial 1996 debut,
in pricey octagonal box.**

Dr. Octagonecologist was a truly singular statement. Issued to little fanfare when the whiny high-end synths of G-Funk ruled the waves, it put Ultra-magnetic MCs' most garrulous wordsmith on the map. As with everything hence, Kool Keith did it in character, as a time-travelling alien gynaecologist of questionable ethics. Yet his offbeat flow and ceaseless spurge of hallucinatory images, barbaric medical metaphors and blunt sexual advances wouldn't hit as hard without the virtuoso scratches of DJ Q-Bert and Dan The Automator's atmospheric production, co-mingling flutes, opera singers and metal powerchords with futuristic electronics. Keith's inability to pen a dull rhyme, blazing cameos from Sir Menelik and Kutmasta Kurt and un-shit skits provided legs that five unreleased tracks now decorously augment.

Andy Cowan

Tamara Ralston

Benjamin Schoos

★★★★★

Profession Chanteur

FREAKSVILLE. CD/DL

Dramatic string-laden Gainsbourg pop from below the radar Belgian balladeer.



Every day, it seems, is Valentine's Day for Benjamin Schoos. Le grand fromage of throwback label Freaksville and author of Belgium's doomed 2009 Eurovision entry Copycat, Schoos boasts a Gitanes and gin-soaked croon that's the Serge Gainsbourg in excelsis and a seemingly insatiable hard-on for love. Allied to a grasp of swooping orchestration that's equal parts Jean-Claude Vannier and Phil Spector, there's drama to spare in Profession Chanteur's Therman theatrics, the lush darting strings of A Mort L'Amour and the bouncy organ-driven pop of Laetitia Sadier duet Je Ne Vois Que Vous. Schoos even breaks from this winning mould to unveil a jazz-some falsetto over the jazz-brushed drums of I Love You with not a whiff of Euro cheese.

Andy Cowan

Bobby Darin & Johnny Mercer

★★★★★

Two Of A Kind

OMNIVORE. CD/DL

A humour-packed song classic now with bonus tracks.



Sometime in 1961, Johnny Mercer, one of the finest lyricists ever to grace the world of popular music, opted to party with the multi-talented Darin. Hauling arranger Billy May into the melee proved an inspired move. May always possessed

a sense of fun, from scoring Tweety Pie to his bouncing scores for Frank Sinatra. All that was needed was a bundle of songs that could keep the party going. So the duo headed back mainly to song-sheets of the '20s and '30s, hokey items that included Who Takes Care Of The Caretaker's Daughter and Paddlin' Madelin' Home. They made them to swing, while indulging in repartee at every turn, adding a modicum of Darin's impressions and, in the case of Indiana, even a touch of scat unison. The result was – and remains – a warm, fun-filled, timeless reminder of two great talents.

Fred Dellar



Gerry & The Holograms

★★★★★

Gerry & The Holograms

FINDERS KEEPERS. CD/DL/LP

Lost album from Zappa-championed oddball Mancs.

The warped brainchild of arch Manc mystic John Scott and Christopher Lee (the latter of Alberto Y Lost Trios Paranoias), Gerry & The Holograms were the uncredited house band behind Rabid Records, supplying backings for John Cooper Clarke's Psyche Sluts and Jilted John's freak hit Jilted John. 1979's self-titled single, a sarcastic forerunner of New Order's Blue Monday, was emblazoned with "Do Not Play!", every disc glued hard to its sleeve. Nonetheless both John Peel and Frank Zappa

briefly trilled their praises. The quality yield on these long-lost outtakes is surprisingly high, whether GATH are exploring amateurish synth-tones (Tubular Belles), queasy jazz-funk (Fake Moon) or percolating vibraphonic jazz with a surprise cello centre (The Forty Three).

Andy Cowan

Lancelot Layne

★★★★★

Blow Way

CREE. DL/LP

Double vinyl plus 7-inch gives overview of the multi-talented rapso pioneer.



Born Lancelot Layne, in Gonzales, Trinidad, a village near the Port Of Spain, this dynamic band-leader is best known for his 1970 single, Blow 'Way, a feverish mesh of calypso and highlife driven by African drums. Dubbed 'rapso', it spear-headed Trinidad & Tobago's black power movement. The flip, Afro'Dadian, carries an equally strong sound and message as its percussive poetry calls for unity and pride: "I must love me," Layne cries. Until his death in 1990, Layne saw his recordings as enablers for social change; the fiery Kamboulay, first put down in 1981, maps the road from slavery to independence; the following year's Get Off The Radio admonishes broadcasters for not supporting local talent.

Lois Wilson

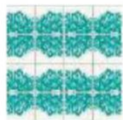
Various

★★★★★

Spiritual Jazz 7: Islam

JAZZMAN. CD/DL/LP

Exploring the relationship between progressive jazz and Islam from 1957 to '89.



The impact of Islam on American jazz culture is little documented, yet from the '50s onwards it was for Art Blakey et al a vehicle for social and musical liberation; a way to express the freedom struggle of the civil rights era and a gateway for sound expansion by drawing on African and Asian influences. Dawan Muhammad's Taumba, clocking in at just one and a half minutes and the shortest of the 12 tracks included on this impressive snapshot, is a mesmeric ceremonial rhythm played on bamboo flute. The longest track, the 12-minute Mevlana by the East New York Ensemble De Music, transplants a Turkish religious melody played on vibes and African gong, to the Big Apple. In between, tracks from Yusef Lateef, Creative Arts Ensemble and more are compelling too.

Lois Wilson

WORLD

BY DAVID HUTCHEON



Serge Gainsbourg

★★★★★

Vu De L'Extérieur

MERCURY. LP

Remastered and expanded with outtakes and alternative versions – Gainsbourg's finest 30 minutes?

WITH THE failure of *Histoire De Melody Nelson* and a heart attack behind him, and having split with arranger Jean-Claude Vannier, in 1973 Gainsbourg launched a new phase of his career with an easy sell – an album of songs that suggest obsessions with gas, coprophilia and anal sex. Your exterior is attractive, he appears to say, but I've been on the inside. Recorded in London with many of the British musicians who had worked on his previous long-player, but now marshalled by Alan Hawkshaw on keyboards, it opens brilliantly with Je Suis Venu Te Dire Que Je M'En Vais (I Came To Tell You I'm Leaving), one of his very best songs, then settles into a loose European funk – Gainsbourg had no idea what he wanted, Hawkshaw spoke no English, but contemporary Elton John was clearly a touchstone. It's a masterpiece. It sold squat.



ALSO RELEASED

Ethio Stars/Tukul Band

★★★★★

Addis 1988

PIRANHA. LP



First released 25 years ago, *Addis 1988* caught Ethiopia as the Derg military government slowly lost its grip on power. Very much an album of two halves, with the first featuring Ethio Stars' Ethiopian funk (Kermosew is the best-known tune here) and the Tukul Band providing a more traditional second. The fingerprints of Mulatu Astatke's genius are the uniting factor.

Dengue Fever

★★★★★

Dengue Fever

TUKTUK. CD



The Cambodia-via-Los Angeles sextet's first two albums receive deluxe upgrades, and though *Escape From Dragon House* found them writing their own songs, their covers-filled debut remains the more intriguing. Cherry-picking the Ros Sereysothea songbook and beefing up the originals' surprisingly punky garage-rock arrangements finally put the golden age of Khmer rock (1965-74) in the spotlight.

Various

★★★★★

The Original Sound Of Mali

MR BONGO. CD/DL/LP



Just when you thought the Malian archives had surrendered all their treasures... The headline news is the unissued debut recordings of Amadou & Mariam (with Idrissa Soumaoro); add Salif Keita's majestic Mandjou and the hard groove of Les Ambassadeurs' M'Bouram-Moussou (or their fiddle-driven Fatema), and you have a bunch of good reasons for diligent crate-diggers to keep right on digging.

Piri

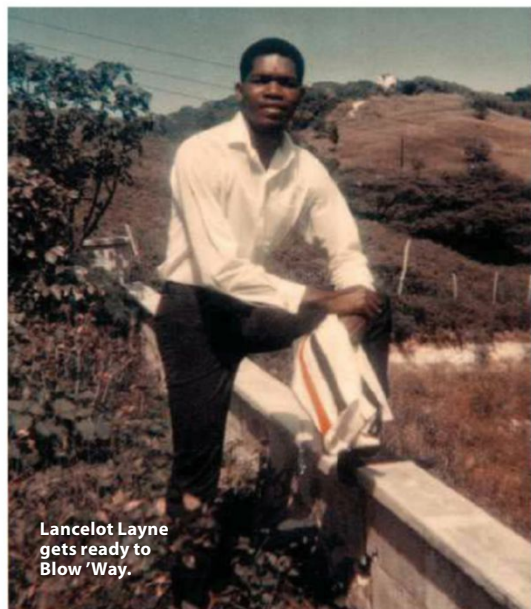
★★★★★

Vocês Querem Mate?

FAR OUT. CD/DL/LP



Opener Reza Brava misleadingly hints at early Jethro Tull-like prog, but the light touch quickly reveals itself as Brazilian tropicalia at its loosest. It's a tale of grade-A duos: Juquina and Wilson Das Neves on percussion, and Paulinho Jobim and Danilo Caymmi on flutes, while Tita and Piri (aka Piry Reis, whose debut album this was) add dreamy nonsense syllables. DH



Lancelot Layne gets ready to Blow 'Way.

The voice of her soul: Alice Coltrane, hypnotic and restorative.



In wonderland

First-ever compilation of Alice Coltrane's devotional music, only previously available on limited-run cassettes. By Andrew Male.

Alice Coltrane

★★★★★

World Spirituality Classics Volume 1

LUAKA BOP CD/DL/LP

WHEN 26-year-old Alice Lucille McLeod met John Coltrane at Birdland in New York City in 1963, she was already an accomplished jazz pianist, who'd studied with Bud Powell in Paris,

played with Yusef Lateef and Kenny Burrell, and fronted her own jazz trio. The pair bonded in bebop and church, but Coltrane also introduced McLeod to his own religious philosophy, assembled from The Bible, the Q'ran, and the Bhagavad Gita, and expressed on the sleeve notes of 1964's *A Love Supreme* as "all paths lead to God". This multi-disciplinary curiosity proved invaluable when, in July 1967, John Coltrane died from liver cancer, leaving the 30-year-old Alice to raise four children alone and continue his musical and spiritual message.

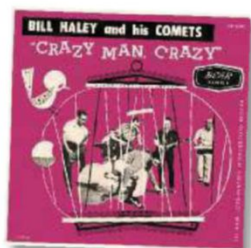
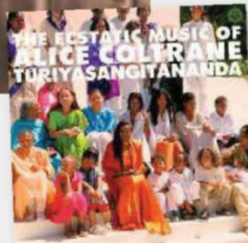
Dismissed by contemporary jazz critics, the music she made for Impulse! and Warner Bros in the 10 years after her husband's death – flowing, arpeggiated works for piano and harp, meditative Wurlitzer organ drones and atonal orchestrations of jazz and Indian instruments – has become a

huge influence on contemporary underground scenes, via champions like SunnO)))'s Stephen O'Malley, and Alice's great-nephew Steven Ellison, AKA Flying Lotus. Another sub-cult also grew around the hard-to-find music Coltrane recorded as Swami Turiyasangitananda (Sanskrit for "the highest song of God") between 1982 and 1995.

Mainly intended as objects of devotional study for residents at Coltrane's ashram in the Santa Monica mountains, the music on the four limited-run cassettes – 1982's *Turiya Sings*, 1987's *Divine Songs*, 1990's *Infinite Chants*, and 1995's *Glorious Chants* – was based around the traditional Vedic songs of India and Nepal. Alice transformed the simple Sanskrit chants into multi-layered epics of weird psychic energy heard on this collection, subtitled *The Ecstatic Music Of Alice Coltrane Turiyasangitananda*. This is partly thanks to her schooling in gospel and rhythm and blues. Soulful backbeats are driven handclaps and tambourines while chants mesh with a call-and-response wildness, Coltrane deploying such ringers as mezzo-soprano Radha Botofasina, John Panduranga Henderson (who once sang in Ray Charles's band), and Tamil-born singer Sairam Iyer, while

taking the solos with her own deep, sensual voice, discovered following a meditation in 1982 when the Lord told her to sing, as "neither male or female" but with "the voice of the soul". When combined with string swells and the air-raided drone harmonics of the OB-8 synthesizer, the effect is hypnotic and restorative.

Remastered from her own master tapes by the original producer and celebrated jazz engineer Baker Bigsby, these incredible tracks sound better than ever. One tiny complaint: the original tapes were intended as complete listening experiences, immersive acts of prayer with the transportive qualities of a religious or psychedelic experience. For the time being, this is just a taste of the full bewitching trip.



Bill Haley And His Comets

★★★★★

Crazy Man, Crazy

BEAR FAMILY LP

Top class limited edition of a 1955 Australian 10-inch.

If Bill Haley had looked a little less like your favourite uncle and a whole lot more like he was here to steal your hubcaps, his real contribution to the earliest days of rock'n'roll might be better appreciated. He and his excellent band really kicked the door down several years before the seismic shock of Elvis's Heartbreak Hotel with these tracks cut for the Holiday and Essex labels between 1951-54, first as the Saddlemen, then as the Comets. Find a quiet moment then crank up Bill's own composition, *Crazy Man, Crazy*, a single from April 1953, and try to resist the unstoppable force which is

Marshall Lytle's slapping dog-house bass coupled with Billy Gussak's expertly-judged snare rimshots, all backed by raucous shouts of "Go! Go!", which helped propel a new generation onto the dancefloor.

Max Décharné

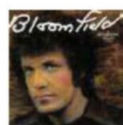
Michael Bloomfield

★★★★★

A Retrospective

SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT CD/DL

A 2-CD set of the US's first and most celebrated white blues guitarist, 1964 to 1974.



Celebrations of guitarist Mike Bloomfield's genius are usually foot-noted with regrets for potential unfulfilled, via his heroin-related death. Yet his achievements were notable. This set includes only a snippet of his best-known period, with Paul Butterfield, and hence focuses on work that has, in retrospect, aged better: a concise, blues-inflected, white West Coast psychedelic soul, the perfect commemoration of this troubled Chicago Jew. A good proportion are chilling: Electric Flag's *You Don't Realise* is a

slow, 6/8 burner; Stop is an otherworldly groove; You're Killing My Love, recorded live by Nick Gravenites and Bloomfield in 1969 is spine-tingling. The taut playing, heavy with horns, transcends genre, while Bloomfield thrillingly drives the song on. This is a flawed collection, with some predictable covers, and uneven sleeve notes, but still it's a stunning reminder of a time when cross-cultural barriers were torn down, and anything seemed possible.

Paul Trynka

Fuzzy Haskins

★★★★★

I've Got My Thang Together: The Westbound Years

WESTBOUND CD/DL

A key player in Parliament/Funkadelic; with first-time-own-CD 12-inch single mixes.



Westbound reissued Fuzzy Haskins' two solo albums – 1976's *A Whole Nother Thang* and 1978's *Radio Active* – as a twofer in 1994. Long-since deleted, this 16-track selection is the next best thing. Haskins sang with The

Parliaments from 1960, and aided George Clinton with his group's transition to Funkadelic; writing, singing and playing guitar and drums during their 1970-76 prime. On going solo, he recruited P-Funk cohorts Bernie Worrell, Bootsie Collins, Gary Shider, Tiki Fulwood and Cordell 'Boogie' Mossion, and added to the P-Funk myth-scape with social conscience funk (the admirable *Mr Junk Man*), space age instrumentals (an infectious *Gettin' It Off*), rock'n'soulful ballads (an intoxicating *Cookie Jar*) and futuristic groove (the Clinton-sniping *Which Way Do I Disco*).

Lois Wilson

George Jones

★★★★★

Birth Of A Legend: The Truly Complete Starday And Mercury Recordings 1954-1961

BEAR FAMILY CD

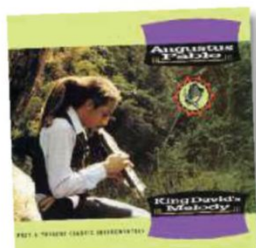
Definitive chronicle of the rise of a country stylist on 6-CDs with a 174-page book.

As with most musical pioneers of the '50s, country legend George Jones's early recordings were entangled in various rights issues and

inaccurate recording documentation. Undaunted, Bear Family's Richard Weize set out to create the ultimate collection of the singer's initial output. That was two decades ago. Now, at last, this remarkable box set has landed – its detail, both sonically via sublime mastering and in terms of Kevin Coffey's extensive liner notes, is staggering. Musically speaking, you get to hear Jones move from being an excitable hillbilly cat to becoming a singer whose rich vocal seduces Nashville and, indeed, the world. Designed explicitly as a set for Jones obsessives, there's the obligatory unreleased material of 20 songs/takes. All that is missing from this hugely rewarding set is the time required to listen to all 200 tracks in one sitting. But that's your problem.

Phil Alexander





Augustus Pablo

★★★★★

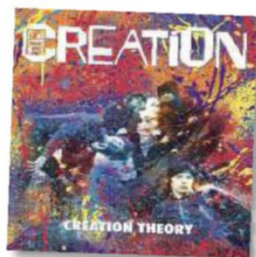
King David's Melody

GREENSLEEVES. CD/DL/LP

Expanded reissue of 1983 instrumental compilation, with nine thematic dubs.

The visionary record producer Augustus Pablo crafted a unique body of roots reggae. After working briefly as a keyboards session-man, he found fame in the early 1970s through command of the melodia, a blown plastic keyboard used to train budding musicians, and went on to issue a series of ethereal productions on labels such as Rockers and Message. *King David's Melody* collected 11 of Pablo's most individual instrumental singles, recorded between 1975-82, including melodia reworkings of Horace Andy's *Problems* (as *Rockers Mood*), the perennial Mr Bessie and Junior Delgado's haunting *Away With Your Fussing And Fighting* (as the title track), as well as some less ominous numbers, including a string-synth and drum machine cut of the oft-versioned *Old Kent Road*. This expanded reissue has corresponding dub versions for nine of the songs, plus good contextual liner notes from Noel Hawkes.

David Katz



The Creation

★★★★★

Creation Theory

EDSEL. CD

Biff, bang and pow: producer Shel Talmy's other pop-art titans anthologised (again).

Hot on the heels of Numero Group's 46-track retrospective, Edsel ups the ante to 79 tracks and a DVD (Eddie Phillips interview plus TV performances and reunion shows). Extras include Mark Four cuts from 1964, aping American rock'n'roll, but these only make more astonishing the inventiveness of 1965-66, when Phillips would rival Townshend as a six-string innovator/abuser. The bulk of *The Creation's* tracks come in brutish mono and ear-opening stereo (though the superior

binaural *Painter Man* from 2014's singles box set is mysteriously absent). Recorded in 1987, *Psychedelic Rose* was shelved (who wanted middle-aged Sunset Strip hair-metal when GN'R were hot?); while 1996's *Power Surge* (released on Creation) sounds like a decent boomer-boy-era Slade album. Whichever package you buy, though, it's the 1966-68 tracks you will return to again and again.

David Hutcheon

Frank Sinatra

★★★★★

Francis Albert Sinatra & Antonio Carlos Jobim

UMC. CD/DL/LP

Ol' Blue Eyes' bossa nova collaboration is 50 not out.



In the 1950s, Frank Sinatra was pop's undisputed 'King of the Hill' until the arrival of Elvis, who led a rock'n'roll tsunami that threatened to sweep most of the saloon swingers away. Though his career survived this upheaval, Sinatra's influence and relevance was much reduced afterwards and shrank even more in the next decade when the beat group explosion blew the Rat Pack into insignificance. Desperately trying to navigate his way in pop's much-changed landscape, Sinatra hooked up with bossa nova doyen Jobim to make his best album of the '60s. Half-a-century on, it remains a bewitching tale of two, very different, geniuses. Sinatra's voice, framed by Claus Ogerman's subtle orchestrations and underpinned by Jobim's feathery guitar, displays a vulnerability that's at odds with his tough guy image. Sublime stuff.

Charles Waring

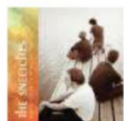
The Sneetches

★★★★★

Form Of Play: A Retrospective

OMNIVORE. CD/DL

Siffy celebration of the Alan McGee-favoured San Francisco-based popsters.



"We were peddling pop in the face of grunge," says former Sneetches bassist Alec Palao in his erudite liner notes. That didn't put off Alan McGee, who issued their 1989 album *Sometimes That's All We Have* on Creation Records. The Sneetches were based in San Francisco. Two of the quartet were locals: songwriter/guitarists Mike Levy and Matt Carges. Palao – later Grammy nominated for his work with reissues – was an ex-pat Brit, as was drummer Daniel Swan, formerly of Bristol punk band The Cortinas. With fully formed demos and a pair of live tracks, *Form Of Play* is more than a best-of dedicated to this square-peg band, one inspired by, at times, The Left Banke, The Monochrome Set, XTC and The Zombies. Internationalist thinking-cap pop at its best. From whenever or wherever.

Kieron Tyler

Various

★★★★★

More From The Other Side Of The Trax

KENT. CD

The second volume of B-sides from the Stax/Volt labels spanning 1960-68.



Reissued here for the first time, these flips from Stax/Volt's blue period, went largely unnoticed – apart from Rufus Thomas's 1964 hep

blues, *All Night Worker*, which became a UK Mod club hit. Often, though, they could have been the plug sides – Carla Thomas's 1964 self-penned *The Puppet*, for instance, one of six tracks here by Rufus's daughter, sets the label's then 22-year-old queen against a backdrop of dramatic, stirring strings. *Barbara And The Browns' I Don't Want Trouble* from 1965 and William Bell's *What'cha Gonna Do* from 1963 were surely winners too. The former captures Barbara's boisterous R&B shout and her sisters' gospel harmonies behind her, the latter, written by Bell and Steve Cropper, is a heartbreak ballad, both immense and intense.

Lois Wilson

Thelonious Monk

★★★★★

Les Liaisons Dangereuses 1960

SAM/SAGA. CD/DL/LP

Rare Monk film score could be the jazz heritage release of the year.

By 1959, pianist-composer Thelonious Monk had been gigging virtually non-stop for

two straight years and his chops were tops. Director Roger Vadim asked him to score Vadim's film version of Laclos' famed novel and Monk agreed, entering a New York studio with a quintet. The soundtrack was never released apart from the movie and the tapes were thought lost until 2014, so this release is a major event – essentially new Monk. Most of the compositions are classics by the composer, but the novelty is the phenomenal performances by both Monk and tenor saxman Charlie Rouse. Particularly interesting is an extended cut where the maestro tries to teach the players an odd, difficult, quasi-industrial rhythm for his tune *Light Blue* – a glimpse into the eccentric barrier-busting of artistic genius. Like every rule Monk strove to break, he eventually succeeded.

Michael Simmons





FILEUNDER

Thought process

A smart label for heads: Germany's Brain. By Jim Irvin.

Brain was a German label that, through the '70s, represented Germany's enduring thirst for rock at its most vivid: boogie, metal, shameless shredding or prog that wriggled like jazz, but also avant-garde experiments in sound, electronica and unlikely fusions. It grew out of Metronome, a Swedish jazz label with an office in Hamburg, and was founded by two disgruntled A&R men at Metronome's contemporary offshoot Ohr, who lobbied for their own imprint to release music by and for the German rock underground. Taking Klaus Schultz, Embryo and Guru Guru with them, they gave autonomy to their artists, aiming to sign, facilitate and encourage without interfering in the creative process.

Brain 001 was the moody first album by future metal stalwarts Scorpions, 004 was Neu!'s experimental debut, featuring the peerless Hallogallo (Neu!'s work, tricky to license, does not appear in this box), followed by key releases from theatrical Grobschnitt, minimalist Cluster, heavy Birth Control and many acts barely known outside Germany. They also licensed albums from Britain – Spyrogyra, Caravan, Gryphon and others – and anywhere else with a prog scene, like Finland, which gave them Tasavallan Presidentti. Brain releases have become sought after by

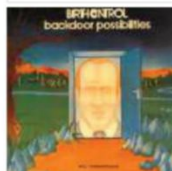
Brain trust: Harmonia in 1975, hear their Walky Talky and Watussi on *Cerebral Sounds*.

fans of psych, prog, early electronica and pioneer metal.

The Brain Box – Cerebral Sounds Of Brain Records 1972-1979 (Universal ★★★★★) has 83 songs (many very long) on eight discs, five of highlights, one of tracks from licensed acts and two rare double albums first issued in '77 and '78 recorded live at the Brain Festival in Essen, all packaged with a snazzy 76-page hard-back book and a tote bag.

Highlights: sinewy, mellow Popul Vuh instrumental *Engel der Gegenwart* from the soundtrack to Herzog's movie *Heart Of Glass*; Tasavallan Presidentti's excellent, slinky Milky Way Moses sounding like a funky Finnish Caravan; Des Zaubereers Traum, an early synth experiment by Eroc, AKA Joachim Heinz Ehrig, eccentric drummer with Grobschnitt who was sidelined as a soundman (he also mastered this collection); a chunk of Yatha Sidhra's dreamy Meditation Mass, an excerpt from Novalis's symphonic prog debut *Banished Bridge*; Guru Guru's Samantha's Rabbit; Electric Sandwich's China, akin to Hendrix fronting a school percussion band; Lava's Tears Are Goin' Home, like Lemmy-era Hawkwind going punk.

Brain closed in the '80s when all this seemed awfully outmoded. You'll hear a lot of flute solos, jazzy wig-outs, wah wah guitar, cinematic synths and elastic bass lines. Like the company's oft garish sleeves it hasn't all aged well, but is still a joyous, generous sample of a stimulating time and place where rock was let out to do as it pleased.



"BRAIN GAVE AUTONOMY TO THEIR ARTISTS."



Donald Byrd

★★★

Love Has Come Around

BBR. CD

Forsaking 'straight' jazz, Byrd made undemanding jazz-funk, disco and pop with his 125th Street, NYC band. This cull of four 1978-82 LPs, two Ike Hayes-produced, dances by on a light breeze of inconsequence. GB



Stan Getz

★★★★★

West Coast Jazz

AMERICAN JAZZ CLASSICS. CD

Before the bossa nova years, three mid-'50s LPs by the East Coast saxman relocated. *West Coast Jazz*, *The Steamer* and *Award Winner*, on 2-CDs, find Getz in strong form on all three – breathy tone, warm phrasing and freshly inventive solos. GB



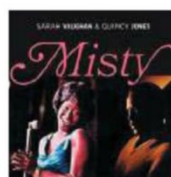
T.Rex

★★★★★

Bolan's Zip Gun/Futuristic Dragon

EDSEL. CD

Two post-Tony Visconti "weight gain" period LPs: *Bolan's Zip Gun* – punchy and soul-influenced; nuttier *Futuristic Dragon* piles on pop and disco. Fans might have outtakes, but has fab Mark Paytress essay. IH



Sarah Vaughan & Quincy Jones

★★★★★

Misty

AMERICAN JAZZ CLASSICS. CD

Quincy's credit is as conductor and arranger on Vaughan And Violins. Sarah is the star, the unsurpassed version of *Misty* launching her career in 1958; '59's *Close To You* included. GB



Clifton Chenier

★★★★★

Louisiana Stomp: 1954-1960 Recordings

HOO-DOO. CD/DL

Early 78s and 45s and from Cajun accordion king: super-loose Francophone rockin' 'n' rollin' swampy fun on songs called *Rockin' The Bop*, *Rockin' Hop and Boppin' The Rock*. Where's me washboard, etc. IH



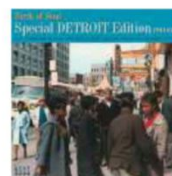
Chet Ivey

★★★★★

A Dose Of Soul

BGP. CD

He recorded for Atco and ABC, but most of Ivey's 45s came out on small indie Sylvia. These 18 1972-75 tracks feature workmanlike vocals – James Brown at his calmest – with a solid band, His Fabulous Avengers. Lacks a splash of personality. GB



Various

★★★★★

Birth Of Soul: Special Detroit Edition 1961-64

KENT SOUL. CD/DL

Latest BOS has five previously unissued in its 24 cuts, like The Sonnettes' fine opener. Hear The Donays' Beatles-covered *Devil In His Heart* and wordy Del-Phis, soon to blast out as Martha & The Vandellas. GB



The Ventures

★★★★★

The Ventures Collection 1960-62

ACROBAT. CD/DL

Early years haul of influential rocking instrumentalists (*Walk – Don't Run*) with all singles' As & Bs and first four LPs. Moody, plaintive or on the attack, the twangin' formula's sublime, but over 64 tracks it might pall. IH



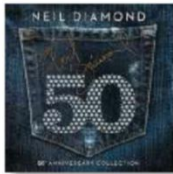
Norman Connors

★★★★

Valentine Love

SOUL MUSIC. [CD](#)

This Buddah/Arista Anthology, on 2CDs, finds a jazz drummer, his Starship Orchestra and guest singers like Jean Carn, Michael Henderson and Phyllis Hyman on jazz-funk, soul and ballads from 1972-81. Thus did NC launch many a career. *GB*



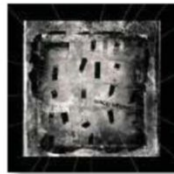
Neil Diamond

★★★★★

50

VIRGIN EMI. [CD/DL](#)

Fifty years of indomitable, sequin-covered song-writing greatness over three discs: one each for the '60s and '70s hits, while disc three packs in the late '70s, '80s and '00s Rick Rubin-guided comeback into its second half. *CP*



Disco Inferno

★★★★★

In Debt

ROCKET GIRL. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Hugely prescient yet relatively unknown Essex trio's 1992 album – itself a reissue of their debut plus EP and single cuts – gets a handsome refit, with one unreleased track. Fans of Deerhunter and MGMT will dig the wonky but melodious Vini Reilly-haunted tonescapes. *KC*



Roky Erickson

★★★★★

All That May Do My Rhyme

PLAY LOUD!. [CD/DL/LP](#)

Roky's 1994 rejoinder, aided by Austin friends and fans (the Butthole Surfers), continued his recovery from years lost to drugs and mental ill-health with a set of scarred but tender, soul-bearing folk. *CP*



B.T. Express

★★★★★

Give Up The Funk

BBR. [CD/DL](#)

Two-CD anthology (1974-1982) kicks off with Do It ('Til You're Satisfied) and Express, two US R&B Number 1s, the smooth funk-soul groove in sync with the Brooklyn Sound. Capable players, but later material and new times let them down. *GB*



Manic Street Preachers

★★★★★

Send Away The Tigers

COLUMBIA. [CD/DL/LP](#)

2007's return to euphoric alienation (Your Love Alone et al) gets a muscular remaster, plus extra discs (hi-calibre B-sides, demos, DVD). Oddly, Underdogs has been Stalinised from the new version. *KC*



Teena Marie

★★★★★

The Epic Anthology

SOUL MUSIC. [CD](#)

Post-Gordy label '84-89 pick of the late 'Ivory Queen Of Soul'. Disc one has sharp, spiced-up dance pop that in a parallel world vanquished Madonna. Disc two lets ex-mentor Rick James know what-for with Casanova Brown. *IH*



Bill Nelson

★★★★★

My Secret Studio (Vol. 1)

COCTEAU/ESOTERIC. [CD](#)

An abundance of opalescent guitar alchemy from the BeBop Deluxe man's home demo archive in this 4CD box of his 1988-92 "instant songwriting". Maybe too much (65 tracks) for casual Nelsonicans though. *KC*



Don Nix

★★★★★

Living By The Days

MAN IN THE MOON. [CD/DL](#)

Memphis vet (MarKeys sax on Last Night) producer Nix put out the nine songs here on Elektra in '71. Made using Muscle Shoals' best, this gospel, blues, loose-limbed rock'n'soul fare is for fans of Leon Russell, the Bramletts et al. *GB*



Andy Partridge

★★★★★

Powers

APE HOUSE. [CD](#)

Out in 2010 in an edition of 500, here abstract, Radiophonic, *musique concrète* inspired by the sci-fi book cover art of Richard M Powers evokes alien planets and cosmic contact. Like I Hear A New World stripped to its essence. *IH*



Various

★★★★★

Max's Kansas City

JUNGLE. [CD/DL](#)

Subtitled 1976 *And Beyond* this satisfying 2CD comp starts with the meta wisdom of Wayne County's Max's Kansas City on to Suicide, New York Dolls, lesser lights like The Cellmates' unreleased Twisco until Jayne County's title track reprise. *CP*



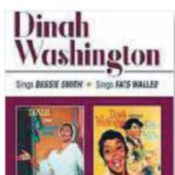
Various

★★★★★

The Songs Of Chuck Berry

ACE. [CD](#)

Another fine songbook comp from Ace reveals Berry's songs' transcendent properties via masterly flair (Elvis), sunny good times (The Beach Boys), social satire (MC5) or garage sneer (The Count Bishops). *CP*



Dinah Washington

★★★★★

Sings Bessie Smith/Sing Fats Waller

AMERICAN JAZZ CLASSICS. [CD](#)

Two late-'50s tribute LPs, Dinah in her element reinterpreting 14 of Bessie's varied blues; the 12 Waller tunes are more light-hearted as she winks us through Ain't Misbehavin'. Great stuff. *GB*



The Zombies

★★★★★

Odessey And Oracle

VARESE SARABANDE. [CD/LP](#)

Back (again) in 50th anniversary guise – extra disc of alternate versions and outtakes, plus digital remastering. Which might just be enough to justify re-buying this enduringly groovy masterpiece of plaintive English psych-pop. *CP*

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Fleet Foxes, new LP *Crack-Up* reviewed next month.



CREDITS

Tracks: TV As Eyes / Zombie Warfare (Can't Let You Down) / March Of The Chrome Police (A Cold Clamey Bombing) / You've Been Duplicated / Mondo Anthem / Half Machine Lip Movies / Abstract Nympho / Turned Around / Zero Time / Creature Eternal / Critical Mass

Produced: Damon Edge

Recorded: Alamar Studios, San Francisco

Personnel: Damon Edge (lead vocals, machine guitars, organ, Buklahs, Moogs, percussion (barbecue and industrial electrified), drums, tape effects); Helios Creed (lead vocals, rhythm, lead and bowed guitars, bass, bells); John L. Cyborg (data memory)

Available: Vinyl-only 2012 reissue by Cleopatra

Metal gurus

This month's gem from rock's credibility black hole: industrial space-junk from post-punk San Francisco.

Chrome

Half Machine Lip Moves

SIREN/BEGGARS BANQUET, 1979

Quite possibly the most original, influential and flat-out weird album of the punk era was made by a failed MGM movie soundtrack writer, together with a former janitor at Honolulu airport. Chrome's *Half Machine Lip Moves* still sounds radical, even after four decades' worth of homage from Butthole Surfers, Nine Inch Nails, and innumerable metal-bashers inspired to scour refuse sites for things to hit. Like a William Burroughs cut-up sci-fi novel in audio form, this LP's gonzo riffs and mutant motorik nevertheless remain tantalisingly accessible.

Initially, Chrome was a bedroom band started by art school-educated Thomas Wisse, AKA Damon Edge, who'd decamped to San Francisco after his MGM dreams fell apart. He pulled together a quartet for 1976's *The Visitation*, a shambolic DIY take on West Coast psychedelia self-released on his Siren label. Thereafter, his violinist Gary Spain introduced him to a far-out hippy guitarist, Helios Creed (real name: Barry Johnson), and Chrome's cosmic vision snapped into focus.

Growing up in Hawaii, Creed had seen Jimi Hendrix and Black Sabbath, the latter while tripping on Orange Sunshine LSD. Initially, the new Chrome was "a straight punk band", vibed on The Stooges, but, says Creed, "I said, 'I think we should be more punk-psychedelic, and Damon said in his deep voice, 'I've been thinking the same thing.'"

The collision of acid-fried Creed and pathological experimentalist Edge worked

Electroplated warriors: Helios Creed and Damon Edge (right), despised everywhere except in the UK and Lincoln, Nebraska; (below) in distorted view.

magic on '77's *Alien Soundtracks*. By 1979's better-recorded *Half Machine Lip Moves*, they'd acquired an enthusiastic cult following in post-punk UK, already keyed into SF's other indie-released weirdoes, The Residents. Among them: Julian Cope – who later described the third LP's total-noise-into-groovy-space-rock intro as "my favourite beginning to any rock'n'roll record" – and two employees at Earl's Court's pioneering indie record shop, Beggars Banquet, Ivo Watts-Russell (who later launched 4AD) and Steve Webbon.

Also working for the store's fledgling label, these two saw Beggars' overnight success with Tubeway Army's *Are 'Friends' Electric?* as carte blanche to indulge their more outré tastes. "We were like kids in a playbox," recalls Webbon, "Ooh, can we sign Chrome?"

On the surface, Gary Numan and Damon Edge might've seemed comparable artists, sharing a penchant for dystopian sci-fi. Numan, however, was commercially ambitious, while, says Creed, "Damon's art statement was to be anti-success. He'd say, 'Because we're so anti-success, we'll be successful.' He had this seriousness about him, but within that seriousness he was so funny."

As a recent collection of outtakes, *Half Machine From The Sun*, shows, Edge was so absorbed by that refusenik vision that they shelved their more approachable material in favour of squawking alien punk-psycho riddled with Philip K. Dick paranoia and Cold War fear, all folded into a disorientating, Faustian collage.

"I gave a copy to my neighbour," says Creed, "and he broke the record in two, and pinned it on my door with a note saying, 'This sucks!' Everybody thought we sucked, except in England, and in Lincoln, Nebraska. But there, our records were in the windows of record stores!"

Chrome might've capitalised, but promotion was problematic.

"Damon didn't wanna play live," says Creed, "because it turns out he had agoraphobia, and stage fright. We only ever played two shows together."

They cut three more albums, each more conventional, but lacking that madcap cut-up energy. When Edge

moved to Paris with a glamorous model/rock star wife, Fabienne Shine, he unveiled an all-new line-up, featuring Shine's backing band.

"I was pissed off," says Creed. "Damon's biggest problem was, he was addicted to hot girls. She convinced him, like, 'Oh, he'll try and take over the band, like all guitarists do,' and he believed it. I had nothing like that on my mind. He was my bro. We'd still be playing together now."

"Damon got heavily into smack," adds Webbon baldly, "and you just can't deal with smackheads."

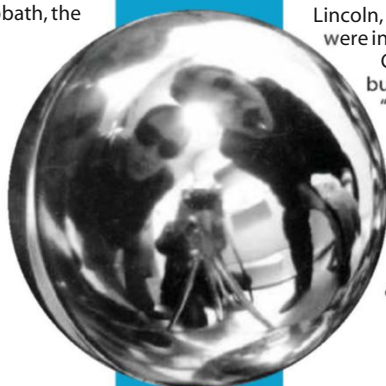
By the early '90s, though, Edge was back in Los Angeles, his marriage over. "Damon started calling me in Hawaii," says Creed. "He sounded terrible, kinda drunk and drugged out. I knew he was overweight, eating to excess. He was like, 'We should make a Chrome record,' but he didn't want me to see him. I said I didn't wanna do a mail record, then three months later he died. He was dead in his apartment for a month, and they only discovered him through the smell – he'd started decomposing."

In the meantime, Creed had been enjoying underground solo success, guest-starring in Nik Turner from Hawkwind's band, but he felt forced into taking ownership of the Chrome brand after a series of acts tried to trademark the name, including Gene Simmons of Kiss, for his son's band. Creed's fantastic five-piece Chrome have duly stepped up their activities in the 2010s, recently unleashing the ace *Techromancy* album, and dusting off *Half Machine Lip Moves* nuggets live.

Ever spiritual, Creed says he senses Edge's approval when his current music tallies with his ex-cohort's wacko notions of cool. "It didn't have to end like it did," he reflects. "He didn't trust anybody, not even his best friend, which was me."

Andrew Perry

"YOU JUST CAN'T DEAL WITH SMACK-HEADS."



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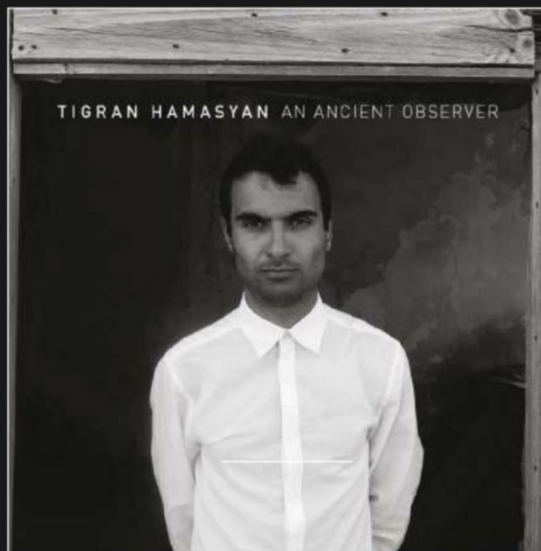
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GUILTEDGED

Loudon Wainwright III

Confessor, humorist, genius.
By Andrew Male.

For the past 47 years, singer-songwriter Loudon Wainwright III has bared his soul in a manner that has simultaneously charmed and provoked. He has written about love, hate, families, relationships, marriage, booze, drugs, sex, death and his own divided self in a disarmingly conversational and poetic manner that is funny, tragic, romantic, heartfelt and cold, often in the same verse. But he also has no 'off' switch, little acumen for self-editing, and a sense of humour that is often broad and below-the-belt (in both senses), with a misanthropy that can easily run into misogyny. He is also a songwriting genius.

Raised in the affluent New York suburb of Westchester County, Wainwright had his head turned by seeing Dylan, Pete Seeger, and Richard Fariña at the Newport Folk Festival. But, itching to be an actor, he had a bigger hero, Ramblin' Jack Elliott. "He was funny and theatrical," Wainwright told MOJO's Phil Sutcliffe, in 2011. "I think of myself in that old-fashioned sense of being an entertainer."

Hailed as a "new Dylan," he was apolitical

"Lord, you know how I get ruthless": '80s Loudon Wainwright smiles despite everything; (right) winning a Grammy for *High Wide & Handsome* in 2010.

"GUILT... MAYBE I'M PROUD OF IT."

at best, but his winning stage presence earned him a record deal with Atlantic. He met his first wife, Kate McGarrigle, at the Gaslight in 1969 and they had two children, Rufus and Martha. But the marriage was fiery. It's all there in those early songs: the drinking, fights, unfaithfulness, anger, and hate. "Maybe I'm trying to expiate some guilt," Wainwright told Sutcliffe. "Or maybe I'm proud of it and showing off."

That mix of self-hatred, pride, guilt and insight continued through further marriages, divorces, bendovers, blackouts, births and deaths, all catalogued in song. He remains, at heart, an entertainer, but, like Shakespeare's fools, he is also here to confront his audience with the inevitable dark truths of life, namely, our own weakness, infirmity and mortality.



CAST YOUR VOTES!

This month you chose your Top 10 Loudon Wainwright III albums. Next month we want your Popol Vuh Top 10 albums. Send selections to www.mojo4music.com or e-mail your Top 10 to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk with the subject 'How To Buy Popol Vuh' and we'll print the best comments.



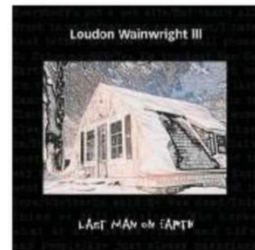
10 Loudon Wainwright III

More Love Songs

ROUNDER 1986, FROM £8.44

You Say: "It's inspired by divorce, loneliness and being 'too old to die young'." Martin Callaghan, via e-mail

Produced by Richard Thompson, while Loudon lived an unmoored ex-pat life in London, *More Love Songs* finds a relaxed, confessional Wainwright backed by an incredible line-up of British folkies, including Martin Carthy on guitar, Danny Thompson on bass, and Dave Mattacks on drums. Although somewhat dated by an overuse of sax, horns and sweet backing vocals, the songs are almost uniformly pained and troubled, and often just downright nasty. Even the comedy songs here, like *I Eat Out*, *Vampire Blues* and *The Acid Song*, come weighted with a little too much sadness and desperation. A tough, yet rewarding listen.



4 Loudon Wainwright III

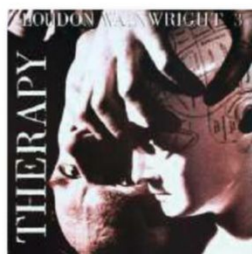
Last Man On Earth

RED HOUSE 2001, FROM £5.59

You Say: "One I could not stop listening to and the one I return to the most. Its emotional resonance continues to floor me." Glenn Hornbeek, MOJO Facebook

Written in the Westchester County home of his dead mother following a traumatic period of writer's block, *Last Man On Earth* is, in its way, a rueful companion record to 1992's *History*. If anything, it's more honest and unsparing, the 53-year-old Wainwright examining his deep loneliness (*Living Alone*), his Oedipal love for his mother (*White Winos*) and his delicate mental health (*I'm Not Gonna Cry*) with an unsparing humour and clarity. It's a long-player for every middle-aged man who's ever stood alone, in his bathrobe, at four in the morning, staring at nothing, and overwhelmed by the sadness of it all.

Getty Images (2), WireImage

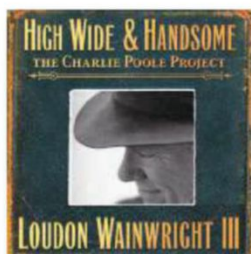


9 Loudon Wainwright III Therapy

SILVERTONE 1989, FROM £6.99

You Say: "For Thanksgiving, a bittersweet song of dysfunction, which is emotionally eviscerating even for this serial soul-bearer." John Dodds, via e-mail

OK, so no one needs to hear Wainwright's trying-too-hard novelty song TSDHAV (This Song Don't Have A Video) or yet another account of him picking up someone "young enough to be my daughter" (Aphrodisiac) but, if you can programme out those two unwelcome tracks, the rest of the album, with its quiet, small-scale arrangements and introspective delivery, has aged far better than its more famous predecessor, *More Love Songs*, and in Thanksgiving and This Year it contains two of his saddest, loveliest songs about broken family relationships, where the voice offers reconciliation even while the lyrics signal retreat.



8 Loudon Wainwright III High Wide & Handsome: The Charlie Poole Project

2ND STORY SOUND 2009, FROM £4.88

You Say: "The Charlie Poole Project is a must." David Howarth, MOJO Facebook

A 30-song tribute to the hard-drinking, hard-living North Carolina country singer and banjo-picker works, as Loudon puts it, as a "sonic bio-pic", with Poole's weird old America originals interspersed with Trad Arr. covers and new biographical songs that recount the strange, sad details of Poole's life. The arrangements are warm and rough, and Wainwright's eye for unflinching detail is as sharp as ever, but the real delight is hearing Loudon singing with his children (Martha, Rufus and Lucy) about someone other than himself, someone, by contrast, he cares about and reveres.

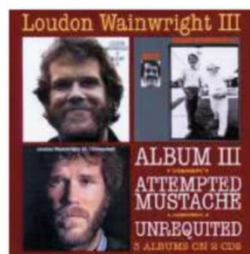


7 Loudon Wainwright III Older Than My Old Man Now

2ND STORY SOUND/PROPER 2012, FROM £6.99

You Say: "Gourmand rumination on things we prefer not to think about." Steve Williams, via e-mail

Produced by Dick Connette, who'd previously collaborated on the Grammy-winning *High Wide & Handsome*, *Older Than...* has a warm, intimate old-timey country style, and some lovely duet work with Chris Smither and Ramblin' Jack Elliott and harmonising members of the Wainwright brood, that disguises the bleakness of the subject: a 65-year-old Loudon communes with the ghost of his dead father and looks back on the mess of his life, the death of his ex-wife Kate, and his own failing health. In this profound, brooding mix, only LW would duet with Dame Edna Everage on I Remember Sex.



6 Loudon Wainwright III Album III/Attempted Mustache/Unrequited

CHERRY RED 2011, FROM £8.98

You Say: "Three superb albums from '72-75 in one affordable package." Robert McCloud, via e-mail

Bit of a cheat – three Loudon LPs, recorded at the height of his fame between 1972-75. All are problematic but all contain some of his finest songs. *Album III* begins with unexpected novelty hit Dead Skunk, but also has the stark, heartrending relationship metaphor Red Guitar, and self-loathing confessional Drinking Song. *Attempted Mustache* begins with the deceptively vicious Lullaby ("shut up and go to bed") and lovely Swimming Song, but falls away, while the live/studio *Unrequited* shows Wainwright at his acerbic best (Hollywood Hopeful) and goofball worst (Hardy Boys At The Y, Rufus Is A Tit Man).

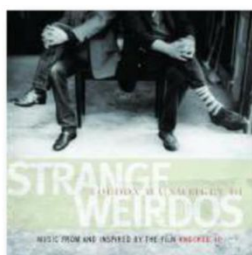


5 Loudon Wainwright III Fame And Wealth

DEMON, 1983, FROM £7.79

You Say: "A stripped musical frame suits the sentiments of songs about booze, ageing and making mistakes." Richard Emmitt, via e-mail

His first studio album in five years, following the long fallout from 1978's full-band failure *Final Exam*, *Fame And Wealth* found a stripped-down, acoustic Wainwright dealing in new levels of confessional honesty that moved from the unhappiness of the absent father on *Five Years Old* ("If you got some roses on your birthday/They're from me") to the world of the sleazy single man "out on the prowl" (Ingenuet). But, at its best, as on the amazing and terrifying April Fools Day Morn, it captures the desperate, drunken sadness of the 37-year-old Wainwright coming to terms with his numerous flaws and failings.



3 Loudon Wainwright III Strange WeirDOS

CONCORD/UNIVERSAL 2007, FROM £5

You Say: "Haven't seen the movie this soundtrack but the album's a revelation. He's still hungry to write good songs." Cath Berry, via e-mail

There's a particular Loudon Wainwright-brand irony in one of his finest, most emotionally focused albums being shackled with the subtitle of *Music From And Inspired By The Film Knocked Up*. Effectively another concept album, ... *WeirDOS* captures the bitter-sweet drift of life in the Valley for Hollywood dreamers ("I lost the thread among the vines" – You Can't Fail Me Now). Co-produced by Wainwright and Joe Henry, with contributions from Van Dyke Parks and Richard Thompson, the whole album possesses a lush, dreamlike, late-afternoon feel, and, with *Grey In LA* and *Valley Morning*, includes two of the all-time great California songs.



2 Loudon Wainwright III A Live One

ROUNDER 1979, FROM £2.50

You Say: "Live albums as they should be done – one man and his guitar telling it straight. And it's an until-then greatest hits collection, too." Geoff Prowse, via e-mail

Abandoned by his manager, dropped by three record labels, written off by critics, and, thanks to an accidental Number 16 Billboard pop hit in 1973 with *Dead Skunk*, regarded as little more than a novelty act by his stoner college audience, in 1978 a bitter, unhappy Wainwright played the UK (and Los Angeles) with a setlist largely stripped of his trademark comedy songs. Following a cry of "Ah shut up!" to a crowd shouting for *Dead Skunk*, Wainwright delivers 13 of his finest, darkest numbers with a reined-in wit and rage that is palpable in all its coiled power.



1 Loudon Wainwright III History

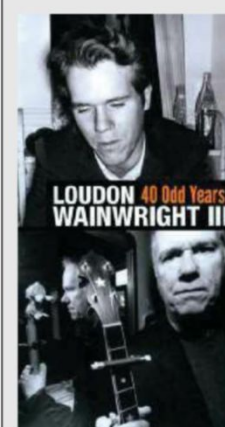
VIRGIN/CHARISMA 1992, FROM £9

You Say: "Resonates most strongly." Worth Wagers, MOJO Facebook

Written after his father's death from colon cancer in 1988, this almost-concept LP (recorded with extended family members The Roches, and Kate and Anna McGarrigle) begins with anti-romance hoedown *People In Love* ("People in love... it makes me sick") and dissects the debilitating clichés of masculinity in *Men* ("Every man's a captain/Men know how to drown"). Raw, truthful songs about childhood and the passage of time (*The Picture*), parenthood (*Hitting You*), and loss (*Sometimes I Forget*) make this his finest work.



NOW DIG THIS



At the insistence of *Knocked Up* director and Number 1 fan Judd Apatow, Loudon compiled *40 Odd Years*, a 4-CD (and one DVD) best of for Shout! Factory, an admirably ruthless selection showcasing his most honest and unsentimental tracks. Better still is the excellent extra CD of previously unreleased tracks and a three-hour-plus DVD of documentaries and performance clips. (NB, the DVD is Region 1 only.) Also check out *BBC Sessions*, a de facto best-of, its tracks benefitting from a no-frills production. Three songs – *Sunday Times*, *I Wish It Was Me* and *It's Love And I Hate It* – are not issued on album.

THE UPPER CUT

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DISCOVERIES

BIG PARTY NIGHT
JAMES ROYAL SET
TUESDAY'S CHILDREN



WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- The first time Otis Redding let loose in a recording studio was in 1960 at Hollywood's fabled Gold Star, where he imitated his hero Little Richard, backed by Earl Palmer and its legendary session squad.
- In late 1964, Redding was arrested and faced an attempted murder charge after a caper with Macon homeboys turned into a shoot-out. Connections and well-placed bribes made it vanish.
- (Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay was specifically influenced by The Beatles' A Day In The Life.

Nuff Respect

The immortal soul man finally gets an epic biography. By Kris Needs.

Otis Redding: An Unfinished Life

★★★★★

Jonathan Gould

CROWN ARCHETYPE 19.99

This December will mark 50 years since the fatal plane crash that claimed the life of Otis Redding and most of his touring band. Many still believe he was the greatest soul man ever, but like contemporaries Wilson Pickett and Curtis Mayfield, Redding has waited decades for a comprehensive biography. Over six years in creation and nearly 500 pages long, author Jonathan Gould now vividly brings to life the man Stax Records boss Jim Stewart called "a walking inspiration".

Previously, winning the trust of Otis's widow Zelma had been a stumbling block to several authors gaining the fullest access to all elements of the story. Gould has had no such impediment. Zelma and Otis's eldest sister Louise welcomed him to the family home in Macon GA, and his exhaustive research started with a local mayor showing him the ruined shack in rural Georgia where Otis may have been born in 1941. He then interviewed scores of family members, school friends, teachers, band colleagues and contemporaries, building rich insights into Redding's life and times, along with key influences Sam Cooke, Little Richard and Ray Charles.

The book starts at June 1967's Monterey Pop Festival, where Otis became an unexpected smash hit, movie highlight and first soul man to be embraced by the white mainstream masses. Gould then painstakingly details the Redding family's slave-to-sharecropping lineage against courageous civil rights activism and brutal segregation, before moving to Macon when Otis was three. After rebellious school days, gospel beginnings and first recording forays, Otis famously sneaked These Arms Of Mine into an August 1962 Stax recording session by guitarist Johnny Jenkins. Therein, his recordings are covered with a rare critical insight that can dissect his faltering performance of Sam Cooke's A Change Is Gonna Come but eulogise the torrential power of I Can't Turn You Loose.

Otis emerges as a fiercely ambitious workaholic who made friends easily and never moved from his home city. After leading the Stax-Volt Revue to Europe in '67, which reaffirmed soul as a vital musical movement, he underwent throat surgery, then, during weeks of recovery spent immersed in The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, explored a maturer kind of songwriting

Give him his proper respect: Otis admires his billing in Forest Gate, London, 1967; (below, from left) Otis says hi to his mum, dad and sister; queue for DJ Hamp Swain's Teenage Party night at the Macon club. Redding won its talent contest so often he was banned from entering after 15 victories.

that produced the gently reflective (Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay. His million-selling epitaph, the soul classic announced, along with other posthumously released songs, the full potential of his mellow new phase.

Otis's death is chillingly described with help from a local pilot, who pinpoints what went wrong in the two-engine plane that stalled in freezing fog over Wisconsin's Lake Monona. The tragedy seemed to usher in the darkness that replaced 1967's short-lived optimism; although others picked up Otis's torch, nobody could fill his giant foot-print. As the book's title suggests, he was only just getting started.

"Otis was soul music's greatest apostle of devotion," maintains Gould. "Otis's special distinction turned on his desire to have and to hold. He sang of yearning and tenderness, of security and respect... He had the capacity to reduce human emotion to its absolute essence."

From his supreme triumphs to his one last heart-breaking phone-call to Zelma, devotees and soul scholars alike could not wish for a more thorough and sensitive portrait.

"OTIS REDUCED HUMAN EMOTION TO ITS ABSOLUTE ESSENCE."



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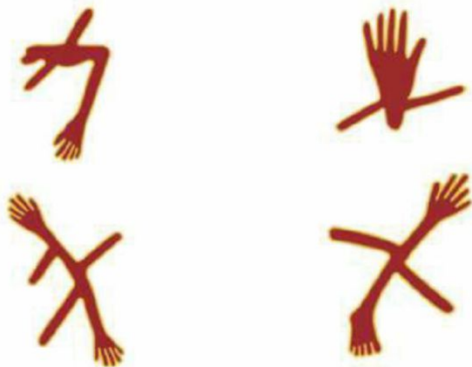
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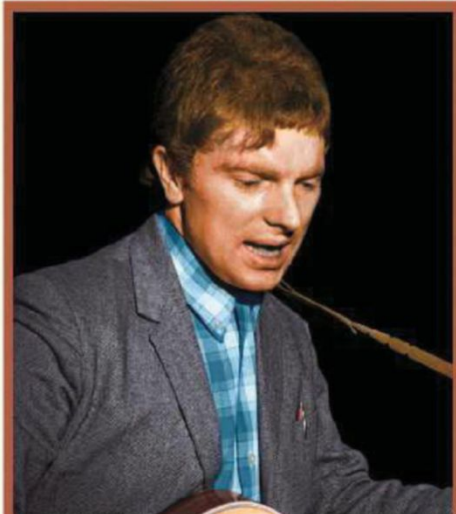


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SONY MUSIC



Get the picture? Sleaford Mods Andrew Fearn (left) and Jason Williamson, snapped up.

Prole art movie

How Sleaford Mods won over Northern lads, old punks, uncomprehending Germans and even Iggy Pop. By Andrew Perry.

Sleaford Mods Bunch Of Kunst

★★★★★

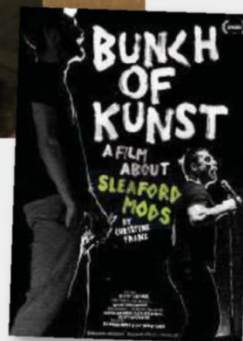
MUNRO FILMS, DIR CHRISTINE FRANZ. C/DVD

"HOW THE fuck has it got this far?" wonders an out-of-puff Jason Williamson backstage, fresh from wowing the John Peel tent at Glastonbury 2015, "we're not even a decent fucking avant-garde band, are we?"

This, actually, is exactly what Sleaford Mods

are, among other things. Initial responses to 2013's *Austerity Dogs* pegged the none-more-minimalist duo from Grantham as an unfiltered explosion of 'working-class rage' – which is certainly in there, amid the deceptively varied and colourful landscape of street grotesquerie, surrealism and self-questioning angst.

That their first movie sets out to be a refusenik DIY anti-rock-doc, with all 'glamour nonsense' expunged, is clear from the off, as we see the band's music brains, Andrew Fearn, warming his socked feet on a feeble heater at their Rubber Biscuit studio. We soon get a similarly open-door glimpse of the 'Mods writing process, as the pair discuss beat structuring, and Williamson rants the line "brain in the hand of the public demand", reading from his iPhone notes.



Then we're off in an aubergine VW Polo, joining the three-man Sleaford team – manager/label boss/ex-bus driver Steve Underwood is the otherwise invisible, spiritually-grounding element – on an early-2015 tour that includes eye-level stage encounters in Blackpool, Wakefield and Scunthorpe. One fabulously sloshed lady in York recalls a comparable Sex Pistols gig in '77; other punters repeatedly avow SM's spokesmanship for disenfranchised Britain.

On screen, Williamson radiates a contained ferocity, explaining how their success since he quit his job as a benefits adviser has brought welcome breathing space into his marriage. His wife Claire says how, before they were an item, she imagined she'd one day hear Jason had died (in a fight, maybe, or too many drugs). These days, he needs "decompression time" coming off the road: "cunt flu", we call it," she reveals, her love and understanding transparent, "where he's just a shit for a week or two. After everybody being like that (awed expression) for weeks, it's, 'Now load the dishwasher!'"

Williamson's relationship with Fearn is more elusive. We never see the wonderfully mellow beatsmith actually composing or playing backing tracks, but his regard for Williamson's side of the bargain is clearly high. "I get the same thing that everybody else gets from it," he quietly enthuses. "Jason just makes me laugh, but then some lines are so thoughtful and moving."

Towards the end, we witness Sleaford scoffing champagne and pizza as they sign to Rough Trade, to widen their reach. Their potential is underlined in a closing five minutes of love from Iggy Pop, who creases up reading chunks of Williamson's lyrics from Grammar Wanker, and marvels side-of-stage in Helsinki. Part Two (AKA Same Old Bunch Of Kunst?) should be a ripping yarn, too.



Big Gold Dream

★★★★★

TARTAN FILMS/DIR GRANT MCPHEE. DVD

Revisionist history of The Sound Of Young Scotland.

It may be the capital city, but Edinburgh has long shuffled chippily at Glasgow's heels in appraisals of Scotland's pop legacy. Hence this Robert Forster-narrated documentary, a partial yet plausible exercise in relocating indie's post-punk epicentre from Postcard Records to Fast Product, the label established by Bob Last and Hilary Morrison in a flat near Edinburgh Art College. Inspired by The Slits and Subway Sect on the White Riot tour, a clutch of firebrand outsiders fall into the couple's

orbit, but Last's vision was anti-parochial: "The point of being in Scotland wasn't to be narrowly Scottish." Thus Fast releases debuts by Mekons, Gang Of Four and The Human League; under Last's management the League prove a more viable conduit for his Maoist pop theories than the Scars or Fire Engines. The Postcard story is also told, albeit in gently adversarial terms: Last says he can't recall issuing a death threat to Alan Horne. A vivid piece of cultural archaeology.

Keith Cameron

Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds

★★★★★

One More Time With Feeling

PULSE/CONOCLAST/DIR ANDREW DOMINIK. DVD/BR/3D-BR

Luminous document of Cave's creative exorcism of paternal bereavement



Andrew Dominik's harrowing account of Cave forging on with the making of *Skeleton Tree* in the shadow of his son Arthur's death broke hearts when shown in cinemas on the LP's release day. The idea was to

keep the world away, by means of this solitary promotional tool. However, after decades of fierce artistic remove, Cave ended up letting the world in, revealing the depth of his family's loss in the movie, even admitting he wanted everyone to know they were OK. As such, *One More Time With Feeling* might stand as a testament to debilitating grief – but it's so much more. Watching further down the line, minus the 3D glasses (special Blu-ray excepted), the film is remarkable for its artiness, its meta distancing, its depiction of vigour and rebuilding.

Andrew Perry

Northern Disco Lights

★★★

PAPER VISION/DIR BEN DAVIS. DVD/DL

How a twisted disco revival was born in the fjords.



In the '80s, Swedes used to joke that Norway should add "nul points" to their name for Eurovision and be done. Yet by the decade's end, a global dance music movement was forming in the unlikely setting of the Arctic Circle coastal town of Tromsø.

Using interviews with its main protagonists – Bjørn Torske, Lindstrøm and Prins Thomas, all now clubland mainstays – embellished by archive shots and arresting drone footage of the icy landscape, *Northern Disco Lights* tells how Norway brought disco in from the cold by dousing it in psychedelia, synth-pop and twisted noise to produce a warped variant that went under names including cosmic disco, Scandolearic or, as stalwart producer Rune Lindbaek dubbed it, "heroin disco". The documentary shows how via a mixture of homespun experimentalism, a healthy dollop of eccentricity and, most of all, damn fine bass-lines, Norway got its groove on.

Stephen Worthly

Bing Crosby; the second illuminated by the glowing presence of Ella Fitzgerald. Undoubtedly, the most interesting show appears on Vol 2, where Elvis Presley is guest of honour following his army discharge. Given that Sinatra loathed rock'n'roll (once describing it as "brutal, ugly, degenerate and vicious") and regarded Presley as his potential nemesis, the latter's appearance is supremely ironic and perhaps a bitter pill for 'The Chairman' to swallow (but it boosted his ratings). The two do duet, but the truly dynamic Sammy Davis Jr steals the show. The footage is grainy, the jokes are lame, but these antique timepieces are well worth a look.

Charles Waring

Frank Sinatra

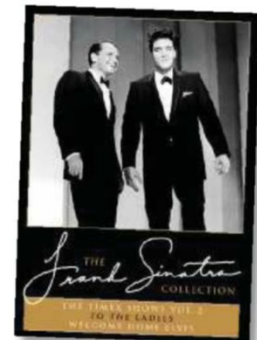
★★★

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EAGLE VISION. DVD/BR

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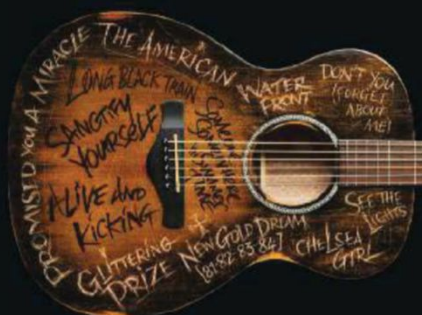
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The new black

Derided in the '90s; revered since. Reading originators make indisputable sonic rejoinder. By Andrew Male.

Slowdive

Rewire Festival, Paard van Troje, The Hague

Context is everything. When Slowdive unexpectedly reformed in 2015 it was for Barcelona's Primavera Sound, a festival which prides itself on its immaculate mix of ticket-shifting headliners, hip contemporary acts and it'll-never-happen reunions. The timing was perfect. Once the most derided band in the UK, whose bewitching psychedelic muliebrity quickly became a mid-'90s hate target for grunge and Britpop boys and snide rock journos, Slowdive have, over the course of 20 years, quietly fallen back into favour, the band's washed-out acid-folk harmonies and grand surges of lysergic 12-string guitar noise becoming a huge influence on such current pop-psych outfits as Tame Impala, Deerhunter, Beach House, labels such as Rocket Recordings and Sonic Cathedral and every third band on the bill at Liverpool Psych Fest.

Wisely, Slowdive refused to work their new-found favour as a mere nostalgia trip, delaying their full return until a new studio album was in the works, recorded with the original lineup. Whether playing alongside Canadian pitch-shift psychronic duo Purity Ring, or choosing Michelle Zauner's new lonesome dream-pop outfit Japanese Breakfast as their tour companions, Slowdive have done everything right for this tour, which extends to tonight's gig, as headlining act at Holland's annual festival of experimental, underground and contemporary music, appearing on the same bill as Pharmakon, Horse Lords, Black Mass and Jesse Lanza in The Hague's Paard van Troje, a Rem Koolhaas-designed industrial space of glass and steel, hidden behind a classical facade; simultaneously modern and retro.

The majority of tonight's audience resembles a gathering of hip architects; slim, black-clad, an impressive mix of men and women, some old enough to have caught them back in the early '90s, others young enough to have not even been conceived of when the band last released an album; a rare few even model strange modern variations on the early-'90s Slowdive bowl-cut. The band themselves appear changed but unchanged, older, obviously, yet still rocking their late-'80s one-colour indie uniform: Rachel Goswell in bell-sleeved black dress and black tights, with lead guitarist Neil Halstead, bassist Nick Chaplin and drummer Simon Scott all sporting a variation of black jeans, black Spacemen 3 T-shirts and black

Pedal power:
(main image)
Slowdive's Neil
Halstead and
Rachel Goswell;
(bottom row,
centre right)
Rachel with
bassist Nick
Chaplin and
drummer
Simon Scott.

denim jacket, with guitarist Christian Savill even modelling one of those shapeless hairy jumpers so beloved of late-'80s bedsit teen mopers. It's as if they've been locked in a rehearsal studio for the past 25 years, deprived of outside influence. This is only confirmed with tonight's opening track, Avalyn. The Cocteauian B-side to the band's debut 1990 EP, tonight Avalyn's dreamlike wash of wistful, blurred vocals and shimmering guitar reverb hits harder and stronger than it ever did at those Slowdive gigs a quarter of a century ago. Similarly, 1991's swooningly serene Catch The Breeze now sounds ineffably bereft, while the haunted voice and fragile guitar loops of Crazy For You (from their still underrated 1995 LP, *Pygmalion*) take on an extra poignancy and power. This is partly to do with the fact that the various members of Slowdive are far better musicians than they were in the early '90s, but it also has to do with the passing of time.

A mood of euphoric romantic melancholy, has always surrounded these songs, especially tracks like Machine Gun and Souvlaki Space Station, taken from their second LP and written in the wake of Halstead's and Goswell's collapsed romantic relationship. At the time, this mesmeric sense of sorrow was taken by some for stoned middle-class indulgence ("I'm sooo depressed"), but tonight, performed with the knowledge and weight of passing years, in front of a barrage of strobing lights and swirling projections, and juxtaposed with such powerful new songs as Star Roving and Sugar For The Pill, the feeling is one of rhapsodic vindication, a band fully aware of the emotional and sonic power of music they were long ago dismissed for.

As such, the evening is at its best when band and audience become fully immersed in these luxurious silver waves of sound and emotion, and beyond a few muttered "thank you"s there is little extraneous audience interaction tonight. But, just occasionally, when cheers go up for the opening chords of certain songs, or someone shouts a request for some obscure demo, Goswell and Halstead go and ruin it all by cracking a smile, visibly delighted amidst all this whirling sadness.

"BAND AND AUDIENCE IMMERSSED IN LUXURIOUS SILVER WAVES OF SOUND AND EMOTION."

Pieter Kers (5)





SETLIST

Avalyn / Catch The Breeze / Crazy For You / Machine Gun / Star Roving / Souvlaki Space Station / Blue Skied And Clear / When The Sun Hits / Alison / Sugar For The Pill / She Calls / Golden Hair / Slowdive / No Longer Making Time / 40 Days





Woman in white

Ethereal Danish singer walks into a cowboy bar... Chris Nelson tells the story.

Agnes Obel

Tractor Tavern, Seattle

Agnes Obel, the airy-voiced Dane whose songs feel hand-delivered direct from the Romantic period, is getting earthy. It's early in her set and she's extolling the virtues of the local farmers' market.

It's not the only incongruity on stage. Her three-piece band, clad in billowy white blouses, like Obel, appear as if they might have been lowered from the clouds above. But these otherworldly musicians

stand in front of a massive steer skull. Stage left a tractor tyre hangs on the wall. Stage right, cowboy boots dangle from a rafter. Surprisingly, it all coheres. Songs of dreams and despair, love and loss, are as well placed in a cabin as in a castle.

Obel introduces *It's Happening Again*, from last year's *Citizen Of Glass*, as a song "about my messed up mind". As she sings that the past isn't dead, "it's alive, it is happening in the back of my mind," Charlotte Danhier creates an aural unease on the mellotron. But there's nothing synthetic about the madness, in part because Kristina Koropecski's cello and Isolde Lasoen's flugelhorn make the delusions feel so frighteningly organic. Throughout the show, all three maintain intense focus, as if glancing at one another might shatter the songs.

For whom Obel tolls: Agnes takes centre-stage with Kristina Koropecski (left) and Isolde Lasoen; (below) the full Tractor Tavern; Agnes, thinking the past isn't dead.

A band that variously features two cellos, a flugelhorn and an autoharp may seem esoteric, but Obel's work is approachable from myriad angles. Obel tells the sold-out crowd that *Trojan Horses* is about paranoia. If love and death are obvious folk themes, paranoia is right out of the metal canon. (You just know that Obel is ripe for a "featuring..." credit on an upcoming Kanye record.)

Across the 18-song set, Obel and her bandmates employ a raft of looping and effects, and yet their precision overwhelms any feelings of trickery. They create a massive sound on *Red Virgin Soil*, as if live-scoring a film about the last uncharted forest on earth. Watching them, it seems totally natural that these four women alone could produce a sound as big as the sky.

During *Familiar*, Obel turns to an effects mike to drop her voice an octave or more for the chorus. "Our love is a ghost that the others can't see," she sings. The message of her work is clear: things are not always as they appear, and Obel is comfortable with that, as character and creator.

"It can be very good to tell your secrets sometimes," Obel says affably before *Mary*. During the song, she and Koropecski briefly fall out of sync and noticeably catch each other's eye. And it's perfect. Rather than hiding this minor mistake, they

acknowledge it. Secrets have power as long as they stay secret. Once they're out, the power's lost.

Lost, that is, until Agnes Obel turns it into a haunting piece of art.

"THE FOUR WOMEN PRODUCE A SOUND AS BIG AS THE SKY."



SETLIST

Citizen Of Glass / *Dorian* / *It's Happening Again* / *Golden Green* / *Trojan Horses* / *Familiar* / *Untitled instrumental in progress* / *Philharmonics* / *Fuel To Fire* / *Run Cried* / *The Crawling* / *Red Virgin Soil* / *Mary* / *The Curse* / *Stone* / *Stretch Your Eyes* / *Smoke & Mirrors* / *Riverside* / *On Powdered Ground*



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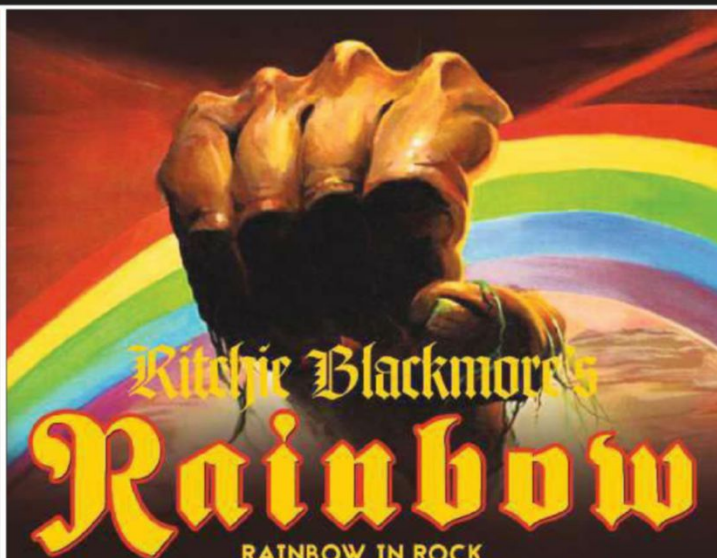
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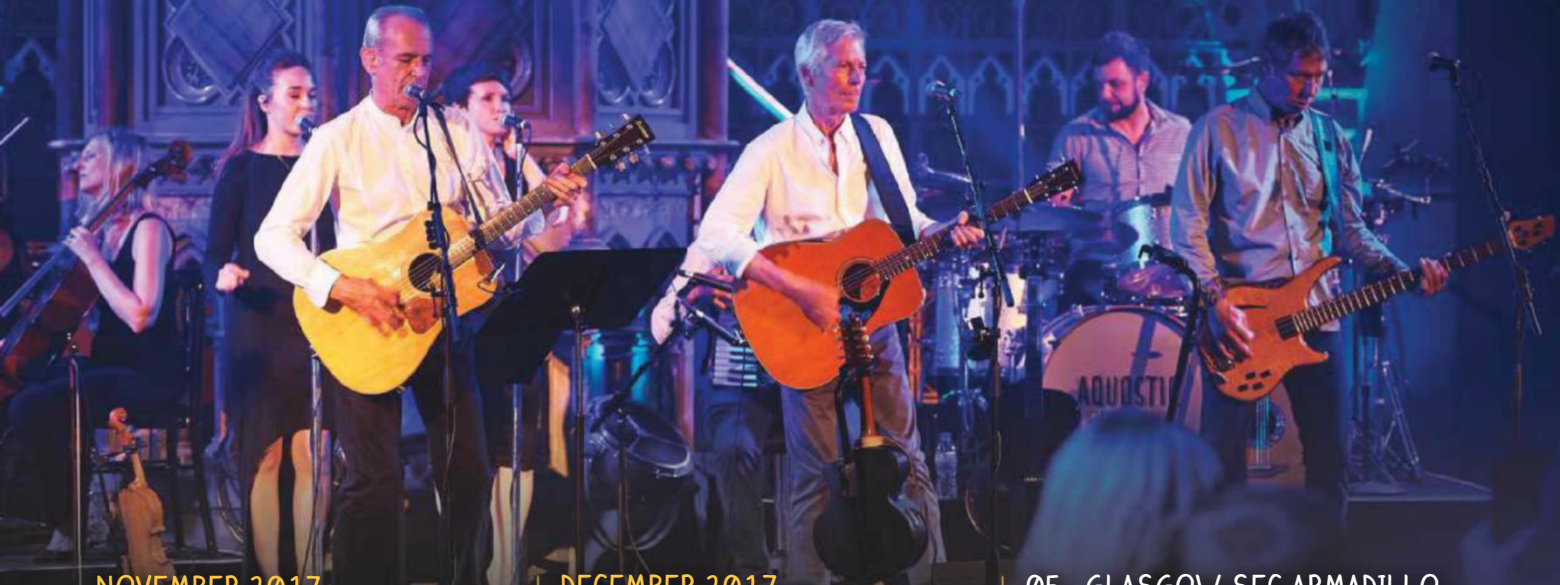
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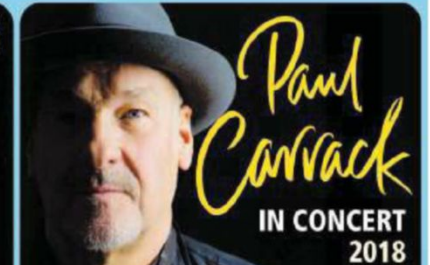
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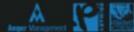
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| 07 Lincoln Engine Shed | 20 Aberdeen Beach Ballroom |
| 08 Newcastle O ₂ Academy | 21 Inverness The Ironworks |
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MAY 2017

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FAMILY COOKING

WHO LED FIRST INTEGRATED BAND?

Want to make a new regime or be enslaved by another man's? 'Til then, get hip to Dellar's space, sideman and Clem Burke disclosures.

Which US rock band first broke racial barriers to include both black and white musicians on a permanent basis. I can't think of anything before Zappa's Chunga's Revenge ensemble... but that can't possibly be right, could it?

Guy Bahir, via e-mail.

Fred says: No, there were plenty of integrated rock bands prior to that. Some regard Sly And The Family Stone (1966) as the first major outfit to knit everything together, not only in terms of race but also of gender. Those who don't consider Sly as purely rock might point in the direction of The Jimi Hendrix Experience (also 1966). Prior to that, Booker T. & The M.G.'s (1962) boasted a 50/50 split racially and there were others. Heading back into a pre-rock era, Jelly Roll Morton was one of the first black musicians to at least record with a white band, The New Orleans Rhythm Kings in 1922, though arguably the first real name unit with black and white musicians was the Benny Goodman Quartet of 1936, which featured black musicians Teddy Wilson (piano) and Lionel Hampton (drums), with the highly influential guitarist Charlie Christian joining later. Another breakthrough came when white drummer Louis Bellson joined the otherwise all-black Duke Ellington Orchestra (1952). Duke, who thought Bellson was the "greatest drummer in the world", passed Louis off as Puerto Rican whenever the band headed South. Finally, the International Sweethearts Of Rhythm, the '40s all-female band whose line-up featured not only African-Americans and white musicians – who sometimes had to black-up while touring – but also Mexican,

Indian, Chinese and Hawaiian instrumentalists. Catch them bebopping on YouTube. As ever, readers' thoughts on the subject are welcomed.

WAS CLEM THE MOST EMPLOYED MUSICIAN?

Regarding the Who Played With Most Bands? question (MOJO 280). I have met a club-going woman of advanced age who brags about the number of acts she has upstaged with her dancing. But please consider the range and verve of drummer Clem Burke. His professional associations (in most cases, as an official band member in the studio AND on tour) include Blondie, The Romantics, Nancy Sinatra's extraordinary 2002 band, Wanda Jackson, Chequered Past, Empty Hearts, Slinky Vagabond, Magic Christian, International Swingers, Split Squad, Empty Hearts, 69 Cats, Plimsouls, Dramarama, Adult Net and others. Many of those bands qualify as some sort of supergroup. There's also work with The Ramones (enough that Burke was granted use of the surname), Pete Townshend, Hugh Cornwell, Eurythmics, The Go-Go's' Kathy Valentine, Little Steven, Bob Dylan... Christopher Arnott, Bethany, Connecticut, USA

My contender for "who has been in the most name bands" would be Tim Renwick. Putting "sessions only" to one side, how about – Al Stewart, The Albion Band, Andy Gibb, David Bowie, Elton John, Eric Clapton, Iain Matthews, Jackie Lomax, Junior's Eyes, Lazy Racer, Maggie Reilly, Mike & The Mechanics, Mike Oldfield, Paul Carrack, Pink Floyd, Procol Harum, Quiver, Roger Waters, Steve Nieve And The Playboys (Jonathan Ross's house band), Sutherland Brothers & Quiver, not forgetting Tom Jones.

Bob Walker, via e-mail

Fred Says: This question resulted in a flood of e-mails. Readers Simon Mullins and Terry Rosen proffered listings on behalf of Eric

High 'n' Sly: (clockwise from main) the most fabulous Family Stone; poster for the 'All Girl' International Sweethearts Of Rhythm; Zee's album *Identity*; musical astronaut Walter Schirra; Tim Renwick and Clem Burke.



Clapton, while Skilly, from Oslo, Norway, merely argued: "Cozy Powell" and Patrick Grant of Houston, Texas reckoned, "it has to be Nicky Hopkins."

WHAT HAPPENED TO RICK WRIGHT'S OTHER HALF?

I recently found a copy of so-'80s synth-pop album *Identity* by the duo Zee. We all know about one member, Rick Wright, but what of the other half, Dave Harris?

Vincent Prieux, France

Fred says: Singer-composer-guitarist Dave (Dee) Harris was part of the Fashion line-up that recorded *Fabrique*, a Top 10 album in 1982. After recording the Zee album with Richard Wright, he worked with artists linked to Prince's Paisley Park and from 1986 onward, as a songwriter and producer, before spending 1997-2000 in Rio De Janeiro. As well as working with John Baxter of Re-Flex, he says he's, "Looking forward to remixing and re-recording certain tracks from the Zee album, with a view to a digital release of the original album as it stands plus a separated album of reworked songs from *Identity*, using Rick's recorded work from 1984. This will involve certain old friends of mine... I can't reveal anything else at this stage, only to promise that the new tracks will shine with Rick's posthumous involvement."

DOES MUSIC DIE IN SPACE?

Isn't there some evidence that various musical sounds don't actually die away but somehow float into space to be heard somewhere in the ether?

Terry York, via e-mail

Fred says: You must have heard about American astronaut Walter Schirra, one of the first men in orbit. He claimed that while his spacecraft was passing over the US it picked up the sound of a DJ playing several records, which he listed. But Houston said they hadn't transmitted, and no trace could be found of any earthbound jock playing the tracks either. Amazingly, it seems that everything he heard was over 12 years old, yet somehow the songs still existed in space. End of story, until someone develops a microphone sensitive enough to pick up these fading signals – imagine all those lost broadcasts and TV shows we'd be able to enjoy! Incidentally, Schirra, was probably the first man to play a musical instrument in space – he blew a mean Hohner harmonica on a Gemini mission, which prompted an ad that read: "Buy a Hohner harmonica. Learn to play Jingle Bells and three billion people just might look up to you!"

CONTACT FRED

Write to: Ask Fred, MOJO, Endeavour House, 189 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JG.

OR e-mail Fred Dellar direct at fred.dellar@bauermedia.co.uk

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They're worth a cool £369.95 each and we have two pairs to give away. So get Cool Hand Fred's crossword filled in and send it to Datapanik In The Ear Zero, MOJO, 3rd Floor, Endeavour House, 189 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JG. Please include your home address, email address and phone number with your entry. The closing date is June 2. For the rules of the quiz, see www.mojo4music.com.

KEF



ANSWERS

MOJO 281

Across: 1 Billy Bragg, 6 Cream, 9 Yngwie J Malmsteen, 12 Hymns To The Silence, 14 Cafe, 16 D.N.A., 17 Lately, 19 Vibrators, 21 Rory, 24 Pie, 25 Rea, 26 Yoshimi, 28 Queen Ida, 29/29D Beau Brummels, 30 OK Computer, 31 The Go-Go's, 32 Rene, 33 Needles, 34 Moon, 35 Spaced, 38 Arm, 39 One, 41 Adams, 42 Eat It, 43 Blues, 44 Ned, 46 Hue, 48 Forest, 50 Rio, 51 Hay, 53 Kokomo, 54 Hooray, 55 Nude, 56 Kazoo, 58 Sasha, 59 Wide Boy, 60 Damita Jo, 61 Ms Dynamite.

Down: 1 Beyoncé, 2/15 Light My Fire, 3 Beethoven, 4 Almost Blue, 5 Gil, 6 C.C.S., 7 Eve, 8 Mint Car, 10 M.Beats, 11 T.L.C., 12 Holly Johnson, 13 Ed Sanders, 18 L.A. Is My Lady, 20 Ode, 22 Orange Crush, 23 Yanks, 24 Pin-Ups, 27 Sacred, 28 Queen, 31 Teen, 32 Route, 36 Pub Rock, 37 Dusty, 38 Astronaut, 39 Otherness, 40 Everybody, 45 Ego, 47 Soused, 48 Folsom, 49 The Who, 52 Avocet, 57 Adam.

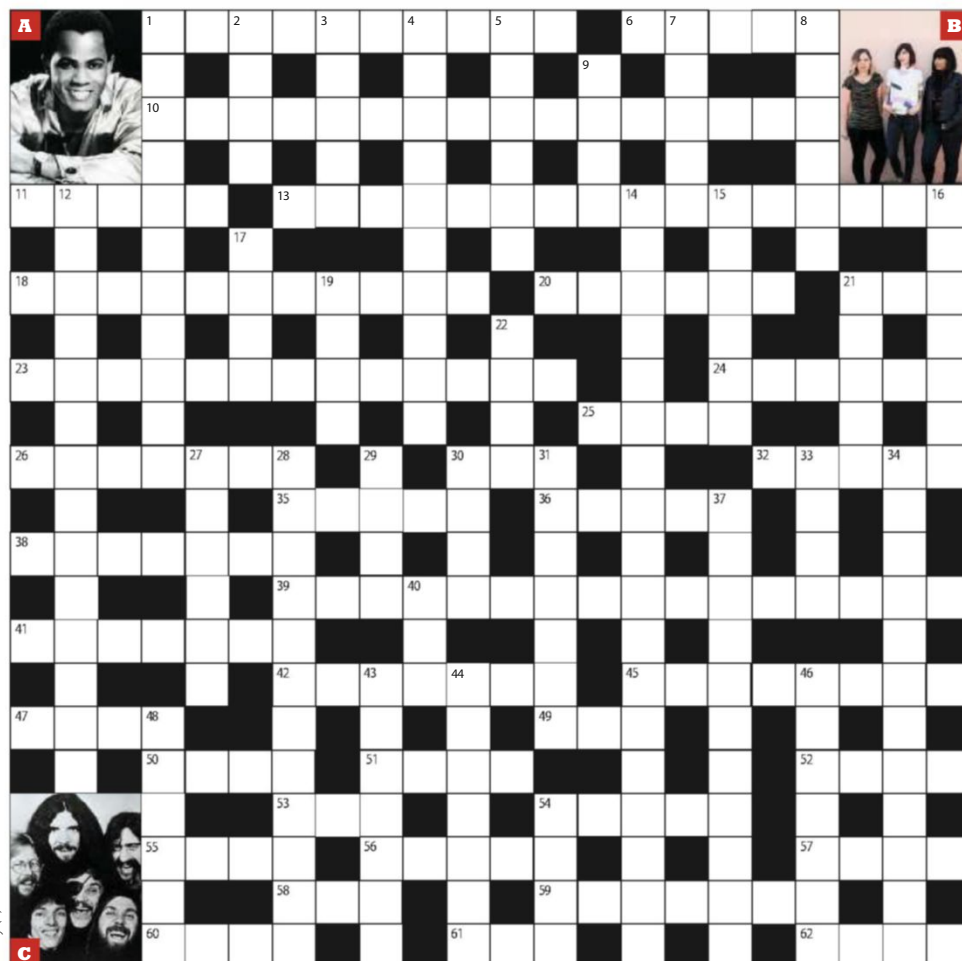
Winners: Jon Parry of Dursley, Brian R Pepper of Chelmsford and Gary Barnes of Leeds each win a pair of Meters OV-1 headphones.

ACROSS

- 1 Singer born Eunice Waymon (4,6)
- 6 He won a MOBO for his debut album *Colours* in 1998 (4,1)
- 10 Emily Addison-Knot unravels for a Boomtown Rats success (1,4,4,7)
- 11 ----- *Machine* (Depeche Mode LP) (5)
- 13 Drunken females required for a Mick Harvey release (11,5)
- 18 He made country albums under the name Hank Wilson (4,7)
- 20 See photoclude A (3,3)
- 21 --- *Com Blues* (Jimmy Smith album) (3)
- 23 See photoclude B (7-6)
- 24 An Annie Lennox album that has America at its end (6)
- 25 Kristofferson – or possibly Kross (4)
- 26 This was a watery success for The Righteous Brothers (3,4)
- 30 Krautrockers whose albums include *Tago Mago* and *Future Days* (3)
- 32 He's seasick and plays the blues (5)
- 35 They were Christian Vander's Gallic prog-rockers (5)
- 36 George Michael's 1996 album (5)
- 38 Tico Torres has been drummer with this band since 1983 (3,4)
- 39 Gato Barbieri scored this controversial Brando movie (4,5,2,5)
- 41 Carole King band formed in 1968 (3,4)
- 42 Manchester band once fronted by Paul Young (3,4)
- 45 Their 2016 album was *Ash & Ice* (3,5)
- 47 Playboy Band leader John, charted with Lucy In Disguise (With Glasses) (4)
- 49 It's laugh out loud time for Coxhill and Creme (3)
- 50 A genuine thing like a Lydia Loveless or Belinda Carlisle album (4)
- 51 Dial around for an album by James (4)
- 52 Links introduced you to Tracy (4)
- 53 Turner, Quebec, Everly maybe (3)
- 54 Kirchin, big band drummer and experimentalist (5)
- 55 Merle Haggard's Muskogee man (4)
- 56 US city houses a Sound Machine (5)
- 57 Dead Or Alive album, obviously unwrapped (4)
- 58 Lowlands folk rockers who recorded Ik Hou Van Alle Vrouwen in 1974 (3)
- 59 They've been described as "the first underground rock group" (3,4)
- 60 Princely hit covered by Tom Jones (4)
- 61 Frazier Chorus's debut album (3)
- 62 All the best cowboys have Chinese ones, reckons Pete Townshend (4)

DOWN

- 1 Eminent former Smash Hits scribe (4,7)
- 2 Arcade Fire's brightly lit bible (4)
- 3 *Lady In* ----- (Billie Holiday album) (5)
- 4 "Faith, you're driving me away/You do it every day" (Radiohead) (2,4,4)
- 5 It was Blondie's seventh studio LP (2,4)
- 7 Medically qualified is rap icon born Andre Romelle Young? (2,3)
- 8 Jazz that's linked to various genres (6)
- 9 Bo Diddley's song for a 45-year-old exotic dancer (4)
- 12 Singing siblings hailed from Shenandoah (6,8)
- 14 A Smiths compilation, unheard universally it seems (3,5,4,6)
- 15 Eurythmics' were sweet (6)
- 16 Animal ----- (Suede) (7)
- 17 Ellington or a Genesis album (4)
- 19 Art For Art's ---- (10cc) (4)
- 21 Little ---- Coupe (Beach Boys) (5)
- 22 Suicide singer Alan (4)
- 27 Alanis Morissette success found amid Helen Shapiro-Nick Cave get-together (6)
- 28 Singer-songwriter and member of the Indigo Girls (5,7)
- 29 *Lord Of The* ----- (Magna Carta LP) (4)
- 30 Acts like John Power's band (4)
- 31 Nag Noel into a Dido album (2,5)
- 33 Jefferson Airplane's hot fish (4)
- 34 Sounds sweet but they were heavy and kept you hangin' on (7,5)
- 37 Macca's 1999 rock'n'roll covers album (3,5,3)
- 40 They sang that they were CrazySexyCool (1,1,1,1)
- 43 Nelly's difficult choice (7)
- 44 That flying pig-related Pink Floyd release (7)
- 46 This was linked with peppermints by Strawberry Alarm Clock (7)
- 48 See photoclude C (2,4)
- 54 Altered Images' molar rock album (4)





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THIS MONTH

ELKIE BROOKS AND VINEGAR JOE

The Anglo southern rockers began in harmonised rivalry – but ended when one of the singers went it alone.

HELLO 1971

In the '60s, I hated what I was doing – singing songs I didn't like in northern clubs I didn't like, on my own. I was thinking of coming out of the music business completely and going to a kibbutz in Israel. When I met up with Humphrey Lyttelton he invited me to play with him. I started enjoying it again.

My manager Jean Lincoln said I needed a backing band. She'd heard about this guy Pete Gage [guitar] who'd just left Geno Washington, so he came to one of my shows and thought I was quite good, but not good enough to put a band behind me! Anyway, we had a relationship and after about a year, he suggested we form the band that became Dada, a crazy band with about eight people that couldn't make its mind up whether it was jazz, rock'n'roll or R&B. We made one album [in 1970] and towards the end, Pete said, "We really could do with another singer, and I've seen this guy called Robert Palmer who's with The Alan Bown Set." We went to a club in Stoke-On-Trent and saw him, and I said, "Oh yeah!" He was great, a very posh Yorkshireman. We gave him the Dada album but it took him about six months before he said, "Yeah, I'd like to join."

Robert was signed to Island and it was Chris Blackwell's idea to cut the

Salty dogs: Vinegar Joe on Primrose Hill, October '71 (clockwise from front left) Tim Hinkley, Elkie Brooks, Robert Palmer, Pete Gage, Rob Tait; (bottom right) Elkie and Robert get competitive towards the end; (below) Elkie today.



"ROBERT GOT VERY, VERY DRUNK."

band down and change the name – Vinegar Joe was [US] General Joe Stilwell, a man who'd be with the men in the mess hall – and make it much more rocky, which I thought was a fabulous idea. Initially, Chris Blackwell didn't want me in the band, but Robert persuaded him and said, "It won't be the band without her." I found my feet in Vinegar Joe. I was doing my thing. Robert was competitive and I was competitive, but you always are, the singers in the band, and I guess the audience liked that.

GOODBYE SPRING 1974

We did three LPs in three years. I don't know how we did it – if we weren't on the road supporting somebody in America or doing stuff in Europe, we were in the studio. But I loved it, being in the band and being part of a team.

I didn't want to go solo. It was forced on us, because Robert had [his solo career] all planned. It was in some club in London, possibly, when he told us that he's leaving. Steve York, the bass player, and Pete just said, "Well, it's not going to be Vinegar Joe any more." That was the end. I was devastated. Everybody blamed me, because the press had picked up on me as opposed to Robert – they'd put me on the front of the Melody Maker as 'The Face Of '73' – and had assumed, "She's going solo," which wasn't the case at all. We still had quite a few shows to do, which wasn't easy, especially with the staunch Vinegar Joe fans giving me bad vibes thinking it was all my fault.

I didn't really have to say anything to Robert. I think he got the message. When he'd done *Sneakin' Sally Through The Alley* [1974] he played in London, and all the ex-members of Vinegar Joe except me turned up. We met again when Steve had a party at his flat. Robert got very, very drunk and I must've been a bit inebriated myself because I was trying to get him to look in the mirror and he wouldn't. He said, "It's all right for you, you can look in the mirror but I can't." I loved him dearly, and really admired his ability and his writing. It's a great shame he died so young [aged 54 in 2003]. Too much vodka, too many drugs, I don't know.

A band on Capricorn called – dreadful name! – Wet Willie were looking for a backup singer, so I went to America and sang with them, to pay the rent. I had to move on though, so I came back to England and got a solo deal with A&M. But I had a fantastic time in Vinegar Joe. As, and in Dada.

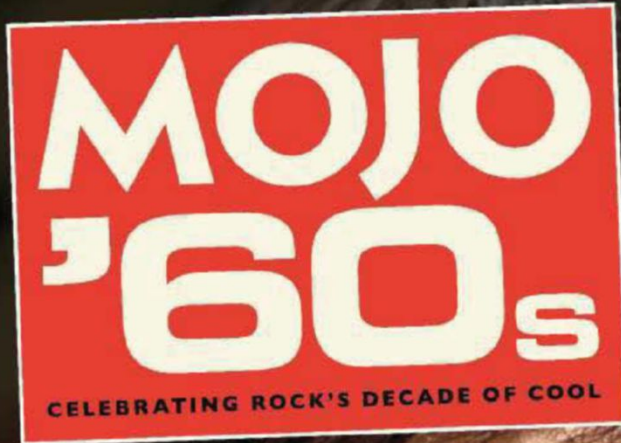
As told to Ian Harrison

Pearls – The Very Best Of Elkie Brooks is released in May on EMI.



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